DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 291 173 EC 201 787

AUTHOR Bagur, Jacques D.; And Others
TITLE Statewide Programmatic Study of the Educational Needs of Blind and Visually Impaired Individuals in Louisiana. Final Report.
INSTITUTION Gulf South Research Inst., Baton Rouge, La.
PUB DATE Aug 86
NOTE 117p.; This report was prepared by the Resources Planning and Management Divison for the Division of Administration Facility Planning and Control. Portions of Appendix A may be marginally legible.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Blindness; *Delivery Systems; Early Childhood Education; *Educational Assessment; Educational Facilities Planning; *Educational Needs; Elementary Secondary Education; Equal Education; Mainstreaming; Needs Assessment; Normalization (Handicapped); *Partial Vision; Program Evaluation; Regional Programs; Residential Programs; School Districts; Special Schools; Statewide Planning; *Visual Impairments
IDENTIFIERS *Louisiana; Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired

ABSTRACT

This study sought to design a statewide service delivery system for the education of Louisiana's blind and visually impaired individuals through the age of 21 and to determine need for a new facility for the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired (LSVI). The report's seven chapters cover the following topics: study methodology; issues in establishing Louisiana's objectives for education of the blind and visually impaired; current educational efforts; efforts recommended to resolve the deficiencies uncovered in the assessment; the future role of LSVI and its need for a new facility; description of a comprehensive, integrated service delivery program; and social dimensions of the education of the blind and visually impaired. The study's recommendations concern educational equity for the visually impaired, appropriate education in the least restrictive environment, normalization as the educational outcome, role of the local education agencies in providing appropriate educational services, implementation of a regional delivery system working through outreach centers in metropolitan areas, increased levels of inservice training, and transformation of LSVI into a resource center with short-term residential programs. Appendices contain advisory panel responses to provisional recommendations, statistical profile of the visually impaired in Louisiana, copies of survey forms used, and an explanation of the LSVI budget. (JDD)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED291173

STATEWIDE PROGRAMMATIC STUDY OF THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED INDIVIDUALS IN LOUISIANA

PREPARED FOR

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION
FACILITY PLANNING AND CONTROL

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Michael K. Marcantel
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

AUGUST, 1986

GULF SOUTH RESEARCH INSTITUTE

EC 201787

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

gsri | GULF SOUTH RESEARCH INSTITUTE
Post Office Box 14787 Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70898 Telephone (504) 766-3300

AUGUST 1986

FINAL REPORT
GSRI PROJECT NO. 2400-2318

STATEWIDE PROGRAMMATIC STUDY OF THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED INDIVIDUALS IN LOUISIANA

PREPARED FOR
DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION
FACILITY PLANNING AND CONTROL

PREPARED BY
GULF SOUTH RESEARCH INSTITUTE

EC 201787

PREFACE

The purpose of this study was to design a statewide service delivery system for the education of blind and visually impaired individuals in Louisiana through the age of 21. Particular attention was to be paid to the question of whether a new facility was needed for the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired (LSVI), which is the State residential school in Baton Rouge.

This report, which presents the results of the study, is organized into seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the study methodology, describes conceptual changes that occurred during the course of the study, and discusses the four surveys that served as the empirical base for most of the conclusions. The second chapter deals with the fundamental objectives that the State should attempt to achieve with respect to the education of its blind and visually impaired citizens. The third assesses current educational efforts in the light of these objectives. The fourth describes three primary efforts that the State should undertake to resolve many of the deficiencies uncovered in the assessment. The fifth discusses the future role of LSVI, including its long-term residential programs, its potential for fulfilling a new service delivery function, and whether a new facility is needed. The sixth then brings the results of the previous two chapters together to describe a comprehensive, integrated service delivery program, the institutional authority needed to implement such a program, and general costs.

The seventh chapter addresses the social dimensions of the education of the blind and visually impaired. It deals with the attitude that others have toward the blind and visually impaired, with how this affects educational content (rather than structure), and with how this affects the attitude of the blind and visually impaired toward themselves and their expectations for life. Though not formally within the scope of work, this issue emerged as one of primary importance. Social attitudes toward blindness and visual impairment will ultimately determine whether even an ideal service delivery system has the capacity

to encourage the development of highly productive citizens who will be satisfied with their lives.

Ten major recommendations appear in bold print in the seven chapters. They form a unified plan for the education of the blind and visually impaired in Louisiana and are not meant to be taken independently. This is particularly important with respect to the recommendations for LSVI, which should not be implemented unless the recommendation for the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) has previously been implemented.

Throughout the report, the term "visually impaired" will be used to cover the blind and visually impaired (except where the distinction is needed for analytic purposes). Blindness is an extreme form of visual impairment, and "visually impaired" is now generally accepted as an inclusive term for the totally blind and the partially sighted.

This report was prepared by the Resources Planning and Management Division of GSRI, which is under the direction of Trent Williams. The project leader was Jacques Bagur, who was assisted in the technical analysis by Kay Latimer, Leigh Ann Daniels, and Jim Hoover. Primary data were collected by a survey research team under the direction of Jim Hoover that consisted of Martha Henderson, Ida Evans, Marsha LeBlanc, Dee Chapman, Greg Evans, and Chris Moras.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An advisory panel was formed to review and react to the project team's methodology, data, analysis, conclusions, and recommendations. The panel members were as follows:

Dr. Patricia Anthony
Adjunct Professor
Department of Educational Leadership
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida

Mrs. Lou Alonso
Special Education
331 Erickson Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

Dr. Victor L. Baldwin
Teaching Research Division
Western Oregon State College
Monmouth, Oregon

Dr. Frederic K. Schroeder
Special Education Low Incidence Coordinator
District Diagnostic Center
Albuquerque Public Schools
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dr. Tuck Tinsley III
Principal
Department for the Blind
Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind
St. Augustine, Florida

Dr. Kern Alexander
President
Western Kentucky University
Weatherby Administration Building
Bowling Green, Kentucky

Throughout the project, these persons offered advice and encouragement through numerous telephone conversations, written responses, and the submission of reports from other states. On August 1, 1986, the panel members (with the exception of Dr. Alexander) met with the project team for a full day in Baton Rouge to review the

preliminary recommendations, which were found to be largely acceptable and are included (with some modifications) in this report.

The day was spent discussing the recommendations and the reasoning on which they were based. Panel members offered advice on the wording and presentation of sensitive issues and suggestions for fleshing out the recommendations in terms of program content. In addition, panel members were requested to provide written comments on the meeting and the provisional recommendations. These responses are included as Appendix A.

The project team wishes to thank the panel members for their valuable comments, for a lively interchange of ideas, and for providing the project team with a clearer understanding of the experience of other states and the wider context of life in which the education of the visually impaired must be placed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section		Page
I	INTRODUCTION.	1
II	POLICY.	5
	Appropriate Education.	5
	Least-Restrictive Environment.	8
	Normalization.	10
	Summary.	13
III	EXISTING CONDITIONS	14
	National Situation	14
	Louisiana Conditions	14
	Some Comparisons	19
IV	PROGRAM ELEMENTS.	21
	Regional Centers	22
	Equipment and Materials.	24
	Teachers	24
V	THE FUTURE OF LSVI.	27
	National Factors	27
	Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired . . .	30
VI	STRUCTURE AND AUTHORITY	42
	The Program.	42
	Authority.	43
	Interagency Cooperation.	43
	Communication.	45
	Costs.	46
VII	SOCIAL DIMENSIONS	49
Appendix A:	ADVISORY PANEL RESPONSES	54
Appendix B:	STATISTICAL PROFILE.	76
Appendix C:	SURVEYS.	83
Appendix D:	LSVI BUDGET.	102

LIST OF TABLES

Table Number		Page
1	U.S. Legally Blind Students	27
2	LSVI Enrollment	31

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure Number		Page
1	Distribution of Visually Impaired Students in LEAs. .	16
2	Distribution of Teachers of the Visually Impaired . .	25
3	Distribution of LSVI Students	32

I. INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION

This study began with the assumption that issues related to the design of a statewide service delivery system for the education of the visually impaired would be both complex and controversial. Indeed, there was an initial doubt as to whether the issues could be resolved. These fears were not borne out during the course of the study. Although there are many complex issues related to the education of the visually impaired, the factors that need to be taken into consideration in the design of a statewide delivery system for Louisiana are relatively few and the direction in which they point is quite clear.

In order to reach this clarity, it was necessary to move from a Louisiana-specific perspective to a national perspective. From the latter perspective, it becomes clear that the major factors that Louisiana must take into consideration in the design of a statewide delivery system are national in scope. The context for decisionmaking has been set by Federal law (which is repeated in State law) and by the social movement that gave rise to that law. Within this context, the major problems facing most states are fairly similar, and there is substantial agreement on the general direction that must be taken. Most states, for example, are aware that they must increase service delivery through the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and must find new roles for their residential facilities for the visually impaired.

The context then sets the parameters by which a state can evaluate its present efforts. If service delivery must be increased through the LEAs, additional special education teachers and training in the education of the visually impaired for regular teachers become needs. A state evaluates its present resources, looks at the state-specific context in which they are operating, and then considers various courses of action. For example, it may find, with other states, that its teacher deficiencies are in the rural areas, where the number of visually impaired are too few to justify the expense of a special education teacher, and therefore begins to look at mechanisms for spreading the capabilities of individual teachers over a larger geographic area.

This was the reasoning process that was used to reach the conclusions of this study. Since the states share a context for decision-making and are generally faced with the same problems, it should come as no surprise that the recommendations presented in this report are not unique. They can be found in the national literature and in reports from other states, and some were obtained from documents prepared by the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Division of Special Educational Services of the Louisiana Department of Education.

Although the recommendations are not unique, their presentation is. This report draws out fully the logical implications of State and Federal law and the social movement that gave rise to them, states its recommendations unequivocally, and organizes the recommendations to form a comprehensive, integrated service delivery program. None of the recommendations should be removed from this integrated context and considered separately. Together they form a rational scheme for service delivery that anticipates the consequences of national trends, addresses the Louisiana situation, and is conformable to the desires of Louisiana's citizens when taken as a whole. It is not surprising, therefore, that the advisory panel for this study (which represented a wide diversity of national opinions) found the recommendations acceptable as long as they were understood as part of an integrated program.

The study originally intended to place a much heavier emphasis on data under the assumption that once the population and its needs had been identified, programs for meeting those needs could be designed in a systematic fashion. This assumption also proved to be misplaced. Although a concerted effort was made to develop a reliable database, this was found to be impossible. There are many different data sources on the visually impaired at the Federal and State level, but they are incompatible, most are unreliable, and the reliable ones deal with restricted segments of the population. This is the case throughout the Nation and not simply a Louisiana problem.

Fortunately, lack of reliable data did not pose an impediment to the study. In part, this was because national trends and factors were

found to provide the needed context for decisionmaking. Of equal importance was the conclusion that refined statistics were not necessary for reaching decisions. One does not need to proceed very far, for example, to determine that the number of teachers of the visually impaired in Louisiana is far below the level of need. Given such orders of magnitude, it is not necessary to determine precisely how many teachers of the visually impaired there are in Louisiana or their exact qualifications. The direction that the State must take is determined by large insufficiencies. As a consequence, major factors are identified in the body of the report, but the complete statistical profile is relegated to an appendix (B).

Another intent of the study was to obtain a wide variety of opinions from educators and organizations on the issues and what needs to be done. Although a substantial number of contacts were made, they generally produced opinions that had already been presented in planning reports or that appeared in the public hearings held throughout the State in 1985 in connection with the proposal to build a new residential facility in Baton Rouge.

In considering problems and needs with respect to public services, it is often best to go directly to consumers; that is, to the ostensible beneficiaries of the public service. As a consequence, GSRI conducted four formal telephone surveys:

1. Parents of visually impaired students in the public schools during the 1984-1985 school year (52 respondents).

2. Parents of students enrolled at the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired (LSVI) during the 1985-86 school year (80 respondents).

3. Visually impaired persons who had graduated from public schools between 1978 and 1983 (34 respondents).

4. Graduates of LSVI during the same period (35 respondents).

The results of the surveys are interspersed throughout this report. However, the survey instruments were long (see Appendix C), most conversations lasted for a half-hour, and many went over an hour. As a consequence, much information derived from the surveys is not

presented in the report and would be useful for other planning purposes.

II. POLICY

II. POLICY

What should Louisiana's policy be toward the education of its visually impaired children? In answering this question, both the legislative and practical contexts for decisionmaking must be addressed.

The primary legislation relevant to the education of the visually impaired is: (1) Federal--Public Law 94-142 (the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975) along with its regulatory provisions (42 Federal Register 42475); and State--Act 754 (Louisiana's Education of Exceptional Children Act) along with its regulatory provisions (Regulations for Implementation of the Exceptional Children's Act).

The two laws are quite similar, with the State law drawing many of its provisions verbatim from the Federal law. However, the State law is more comprehensive, since it covers exceptional children in general, which includes the subset of handicapped children, but also the subset of the gifted and talented. Both laws require free, appropriate public education in a least-restrictive environment. The meaning of "free public education" is evident. Consideration must be given to the meaning of "appropriate" and "least-restrictive environment," since these establish the legislative context for decisionmaking.

Appropriate Education

What should Louisiana attempt to achieve with respect to the education of the visually impaired? Should it attempt to provide the best education possible, or should its aims be more modest?

Legislative Context

Public Law 94-142 is a direct outgrowth of America's historic quest to realize in practice the founding principles of equality in humanity and equality before the law by removing barriers to social, political, and economic participation. It is an equal opportunity Act for the education of the handicapped. It says that the handicapped should be given the free public education available to other citizens through the provision of special services that would make that education meaningful.

According to the "Statement of Findings and Purpose" of Public Law 94-142:

> More than half of the handicapped children in the United States do not receive appropriate educational services which would enable them to have full equality of opportunity. . . . It is in the national interest that the Federal Government assist State and local efforts to provide programs to meet the educational needs of handicapped children in order to assure equal protection of the law.

Neither the Federal nor the State law intends special educational advantages for handicapped children above and beyond the educational rights afforded to non-handicapped children. Rather, the intent of the laws is to correct a deficiency so that handicapped children will achieve parity of educational opportunity with non-handicapped children to the degree that special services can overcome the educational impediments imposed by handicaps. Public Law 94-142 seeks equal protection of the law, not reverse discrimination, through the establishment of a right to an appropriate education.

By "appropriate education" the laws mean an education that is appropriate to the various handicapping conditions. Congress and the State Legislature were dealing with a situation in which many handicapped children were not receiving any education, were languishing in classrooms without special attention to the educational needs imposed by their handicap, or were receiving special attention but not to a sufficient degree to enable normal progress. The public realm, which provides a free education to all children, was not fulfilling its educational responsibilities to handicapped children.

The laws were designed to correct this deficiency by providing a right to services that would meet the educational needs of each child in terms of his specific handicapping conditions. These specifics are identified in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), which serves as the educational plan for each handicapped child in terms of his individual handicapping conditions. This necessitates a wide range of services, since each type of handicap imposes its own requirements, many children are multiply handicapped, and each handicap type includes a wide range of severities.

Practical Context

The laws are not concerned with maximizing educational opportunities for the handicapped. Rather, they guarantee a level of services that enable each handicapped child to receive an education commensurate with that which the public realm supplies (or ought to supply) to other children. It follows that Louisiana is not required to provide the best educational services possible for visually impaired children, and the parents of visually impaired children cannot legitimately claim that their children have a legal right to an exemplary education.

In addition to the legal context, there are a number of practical considerations that argue against an attempt to achieve the best education possible:

1. The non-handicapped population is not afforded such a right.
2. When special advantages are given to one group by the public realm, it violates elementary principles of fairness.
3. Provision of special advantages to one group leads immediately to a clamor for special advantages by other groups.
4. "Best education possible" is an unlimited concept and therefore offers no basis for rational action.
5. The pursuit of unlimited ideals by the public realm leads to misallocation of resources and, generally, to the nonattainment of essentials.
6. The provision of special advantages would be incompatible with the expressed desires of the visually impaired, who wish to be treated like everyone else.
7. It is unseemly for a state that has not attained adequate services to set its sights on higher goals.

Conclusion

For legal and practical reasons, Louisiana should not aim at the best education possible. Rather, STATE EDUCATIONAL POLICY FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED SHOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARD EDUCATIONAL EQUITY. In pursuing equity (or fairness) THE STATE SHOULD DEDICATE ITSELF TO THE PROVISION OF AN APPROPRIATE EDUCATION TO EACH OF ITS VISUALLY IMPAIRED CHILDREN. Such an education would provide the needed special services to remove (insofar as this is possible) the educational consequences of visual impairment so that the visually impaired child can compete educationally with his non-handicapped peers.

This should not be taken to mean that the State should only attempt to provide to the visually impaired the same level of education as is currently provided to others. There is a great deal of room for improvement all around.

Least-Restrictive Environment

Where should this education take place? The legal concept of "appropriate education" aims at establishing a basic floor of educational opportunity for the handicapped. It is joined in both Federal and State law with directives toward what has come to be called the "least-restrictive environment" as the place where appropriate education should be given.

Legislative Context

Both laws are directed toward placement of the handicapped child in the most normal setting compatible with his educational needs as determined by type and severity of handicap. The normal classroom is a nonrestrictive environment. However, because of their special educational needs, most handicapped children must be removed from the nonrestrictive environment for at least part of the day, and some must be taken completely out of the regular school and placed in institutions. Restriction, therefore, is a range of settings at various degrees of removal from the normal classroom. Each child must be placed in the least-restrictive setting compatible with his ability to obtain an appropriate education.

The idea of a "least-restrictive environment" is closely allied with the type and severity of handicap. The least-restrictive environment is the one closest to normality that provides an adequate setting for the child to receive an appropriate education in terms of his specific handicap (or handicaps) and degree of handicapping condition. Public Law 94-142, for example, requires the states to establish "procedures to assure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children. . .are educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in

regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily."

Practical Context

The laws are not concerned with the non-handicapping, personal qualities of the child or with the provision of an environment that would maximize educational opportunities. The courts have ruled that if two settings offer equal educational advantages but one is more restrictive, the least restrictive must be chosen; and that even if the more restrictive offers greater educational advantages, the least restrictive must be chosen. In addition, the laws do not attempt to deal with educational impediments beyond the handicapping condition. Once the educational consequences of the handicapping condition have been removed (insofar as that is possible), the handicapped child is like everyone else subject to the vicissitudes of childhood and adolescence.

In designing an IEP for a visually impaired child, three major questions must be asked:

1. What is the nature and degree of impairment, and are there other handicapping conditions?

2. What services are needed for a child with this degree of impairment to obtain an appropriate education?

3. What is the least-restrictive environment in which these services can be offered?

Given the wide range of service needs at different periods of life, the least-restrictive environment is generally not definable as a single institutional setting. However, in the original IEP and its subsequent modifications, whatever services can be provided in the normal classroom should be so provided; and whatever cannot be provided in the normal classroom should be provided in a setting least removed from the normal classroom.

Public Law 94-142 did not attempt to define the least-restrictive environment for each handicap and each degree of severity. In part, this was because what constitutes the least-restrictive environment for a handicapping condition cannot be determined as a matter of principle. It is an empirical question, requiring demonstration, and the answer

should be expected to change over time; for if it can be demonstrated (e.g., through a pilot program) that an environment less restrictive than the least restrictive in current practice can provide appropriate education for a particular handicapping condition, this becomes the least-restrictive environment for that handicapping condition.

Lastly, the courts have made it abundantly clear that the least-restrictive environment cannot be determined by reference to what is currently available in a particular place. If, for example, it is determined that a resource room in a public school is the least-restrictive environment for a particular visually impaired child, the local school district cannot send the child elsewhere with the argument that the school has no resource room. The need of the child determines the service-provision responsibilities of the district. If this were not the case, the law would have no force.

Conclusion

LOUISIANA SHOULD PROVIDE SERVICES THAT WOULD ENABLE EACH VISUALLY IMPAIRED CHILD TO RECEIVE AN EDUCATION IN THE LEAST-RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH AN APPROPRIATE EDUCATION CAN BE PROVIDED GIVEN THE NATURE AND SEVERITY OF THE CHILD'S HANDICAPPING CONDITION. In addition, the State should monitor other states to determine progress in the identification of least-restrictive environments for various services.

Normalization

What is the intent of this educational policy? If it does not attempt to make the visually impaired educationally better off than everyone else, if it mandates placement in the least-restrictive environment, and if it requires placement in the least-restrictive environment in which an appropriate education can be achieved even if a better education is available elsewhere, the policy obviously intends something other than educational excellence.

Legislative Context

The ultimate goal is not spelled out clearly in either the Federal or State law. However, laws that aim at equity and that attempt to keep the child at home and educated with his peers are seeking to

invest the education of the handicapped with normality and to insure that the education of the handicapped will produce a condition of normality. As expressed in Senate Report 94-168, the goal is to provide skills that would enable a handicapped child to become a productive and contributing citizen, independent and self sufficient, insofar as the child's abilities and disabilities permit. In short, the goal is to make the handicapped child, insofar as possible, like everyone else.

Practical Context

Normalization refers to the inclusion of the handicapped person in the social mainstream. The inclusion has educational and post-educational components. At the end of education, the handicapped are to function like everyone else insofar as possible. The purpose of education is to achieve that normality. The least-restrictive educational environment is mandated because it is the most normal, and it is assumed that the most normal education for the child will lead to the most normalized adult.

The laws did not emerge out of nowhere or portend a new social movement. Rather, they were the result of a long historic development and gave impetus to what was already transpiring. Berthold Lowenfeld is one of the most important writers on the education of the visually impaired. His book The Changing Status of the Blind: From Separation to Integration maintains that the movement from primitive and classic neglect, ostracism and destruction; to custodial arrangements through the influence of Judaism and Christianity; to active advancement through institutionalization; to deinstitutionalization and integration has been one of the few documentable examples of human progress.

Lowenfeld sees deinstitutionalization, or mainstreaming as it is more popularly called, as only the latest phase in the normalization process. The founding of various types of institutions for the blind during the last century was itself a part of the movement toward normalization, since the institutions provided the first education and training for groups that previously had either been neglected or provided only custodial care. In addition, their main objective was to

train blind youth to take their place in the social and economic life of their communities as contributing members.

When the institutions for the blind were first begun, they were the only available corrective mechanisms during a period when public education was not widespread. However, it was recognized that they provided an artificial, limiting, and less-than-ideal environment. Lowenfeld is fond of quoting Samuel Gridley Howe, the great educator and first director of Perkins School for the Blind:

> I would have the blind attend common schools in all cases where it is feasible. . . . Depend upon it, one of the future reforms in the education of the blind will be to send blind children to the common schools, to be taught with common children in all those branches not absolutely requiring visible illustrations. . . . We shall avail ourselves of the special institutions less, and the local schools more.

Lowenfeld calls this a prophetic pronouncement, and so it was. At the turn of the century, almost all visually impaired children were in institutions if they received any care at all. Nearly 90 percent are now receiving their education through the public school system. With the spread of public education, the emergence of an economic abundance that did not necessitate the consolidation of resources, and the increasing availability of expertise at the local level, institutions were bound to be affected by the strong desires of parents to keep their children at home and educate them in a normal setting. The ultimate outcome was the bold proclamation by Public Law 94-142:

> Developments in the training of teachers and in diagnostic and instructional procedures and methods have advanced to the point that, given appropriate funding, State and local educational agencies can and will provide effective special education and related services to meet the needs of handicapped children.

Conclusion

In the education of the visually impaired, LOUISIANA SHOULD PROVIDE SERVICES IN THE MOST NORMAL ENVIRONMENT COMPATIBLE WITH EDUCATIONAL NEEDS. Within each educational environment, NORMALIZATION SHOULD BE INTENDED AS THE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOME.

Summary

THE PURPOSE OF LOUISIANA'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED SHOULD BE:

1. TO ACHIEVE EDUCATIONAL EQUITY FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED
2. BY PROVIDING AN EDUCATION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR EACH CHILD IN TERMS OF HIS HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS
3. IN AN EDUCATIONAL SETTING CLOSEST TO THE NORMAL THAT HAS THE CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE AN APPROPRIATE EDUCATION
4. AND IN ALL OF ITS EDUCATIONAL ENDEAVORS TO INTEND NORMALIZATION.

III. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The foregoing policy is not simply a recommended policy; it is, in fact, State policy as manifest in the Education of Exceptional Children Act. Is Louisiana fulfilling its policy for the education of its visually impaired children? This chapter addresses the Louisiana situation as part of a national situation, cites the Louisiana evidence, and draws some comparisons to other states.

National Situation

When Congress passed Public Law 94-142, it envisioned that substantial sums would be sent to the states to assist in implementation. Although money has been made available, it is not nearly at the level that was originally envisioned. As a consequence, the states have had thrust upon them an extremely expensive social mandate. Understandably, few states have approximated the requirements of the law with respect to provision of services in the Local Education Agencies (LEAs).

The burden has fallen heavily on LEAs and particularly on the LEAs in rural areas, which may see only a few visually impaired students in a decade and find it difficult to justify the costs of an appropriate education. When an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is prepared, the LEA cannot legally claim absence of services, lack of money, or availability of services elsewhere (e.g., in a state residential facility) as an excuse for not providing services if the least-restrictive environment is at the local level. Understandably, many LEAs have not been diligent in identifying the handicapped or in preparing IEPs that provide a full list of service needs.

Louisiana Conditions

Louisiana's policy is dedicated to providing for each of its visually impaired children an appropriate education in a least-restrictive environment, with normalization as the intended outcome. How well is the State doing in meeting these three objectives?

To answer this question, it is necessary to draw a distinction between the LEAs and the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired (LSVI). During the 1985-86 school year, there were 116 students at

LSVI, 29 of whom were day students from East Baton Rouge and surrounding parishes. During the same school year, there were approximately 500 visually impaired students in the LEAs, 100 of whom had visual impairment as a secondary handicapping condition (Figure 1). Most of the visually impaired students are being served in the large urban LEAs and at LSVI.

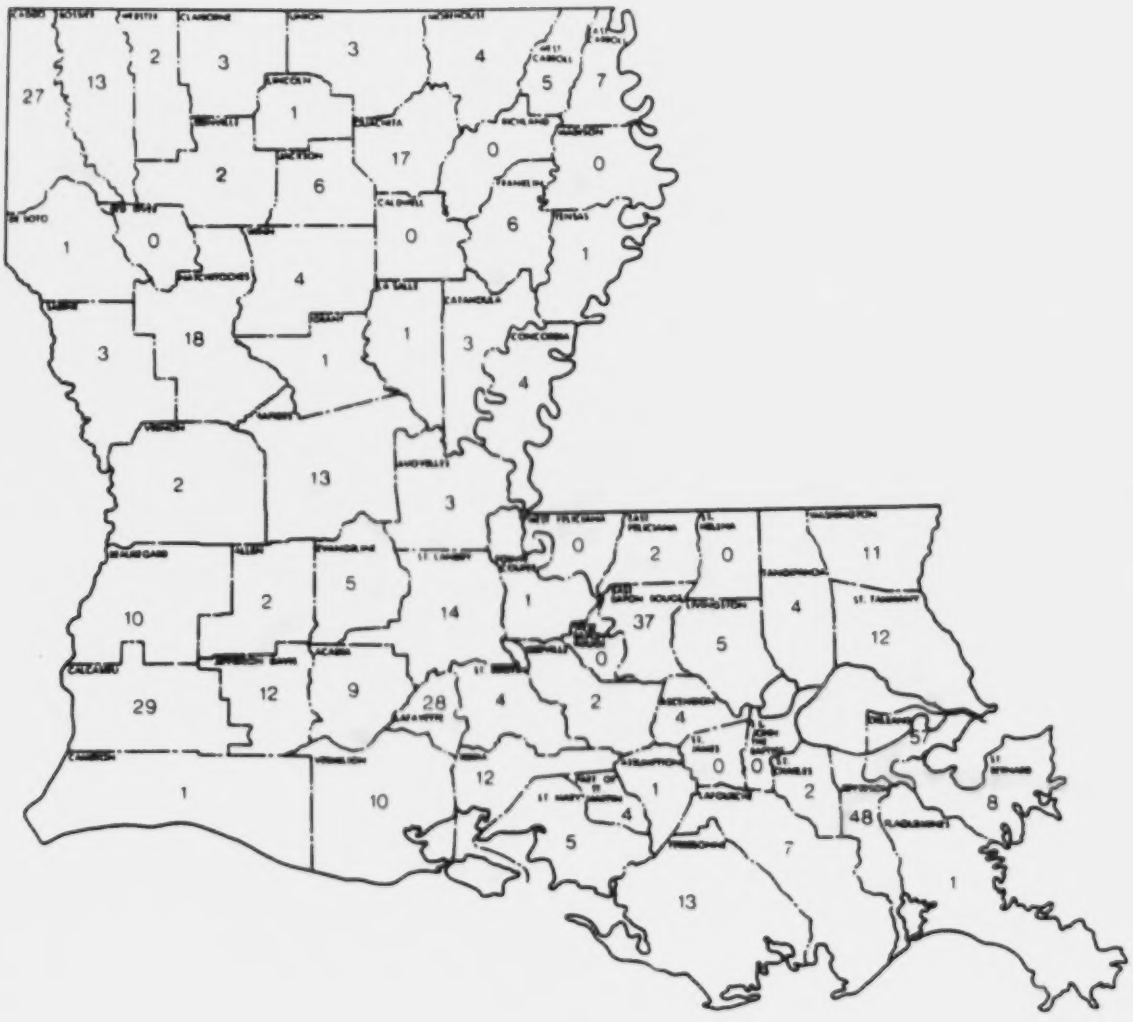
Appropriate Education

With respect to the appropriateness of education received, GSRI's four surveys revealed the following:

1. Overall Quality--Public school graduates, LSVI graduates, parents of visually impaired public school students, and parents of LSVI students all rated the education services they or their children received highly (with large majorities expressing "satisfied" or "very satisfied"). Public school graduates who had attended LSVI rated the educational services highly. However, LSVI graduates and the parents of LSVI students were generally dissatisfied with public school programs that had been attended.

2. Specific Qualities--For the LSVI graduates, "teachers who care" was seen as the primary benefit of LSVI attendance that could not be obtained from the public schools. For the public school graduates, the mainstreaming experience was the primary benefit of public school attendance that could not be obtained through LSVI.

3. Deficiencies--Public school graduates did not cite many public school deficiencies. Lack of equipment, materials, and teachers were cited a few times, with costs given as the reason for deficiency in services. LSVI graduates did not cite any deficiencies with respect to services rendered at LSVI, but were critical of the public schools attended because of teacher, equipment, and materials deficiencies attributable to the low incidence of visual impairment in rural parishes and the high cost of services. Public school parents cited deficiencies in tutoring and special help along with miscellaneous equipment, materials, and program needs. Cost was given as the primary reason for service deficiencies. Parents of LSVI students were critical of the public schools their children had attended, citing deficiencies of services and equipment in the public schools as the primary reason for placement at LSVI. These parents were particularly concerned about the lack of specialized attention and books (as well as other equipment and materials), citing lack of time for special attention, high cost, and low incidence (especially in the rural parishes).



Sources: Louisiana Learning Resources System; and Gulf South Research Institute.

Figure 1. Distribution of Visually Impaired Students in LEAs

4. Needed Changes--Public school graduates and LSVI graduates who attended public schools cited a need for services and equipment in the public schools that would provide visually impaired public school students equal educational opportunities. The parents of public school students cited a need for more qualified teachers. Parents of LSVI students did not feel that any particular changes were needed at LSVI, but most saw a need for more special equipment and trained teachers in the public schools.

Least-Restrictive Environment

With respect to the objective of attaining the least-restrictive environment, GSRI's four surveys revealed the following:

1. Self-Contained Classrooms--Throughout the United States, placement of the visually impaired in self-contained classrooms (student spends all of his time in a special classroom though he attends a regular school) is becoming more prevalent. Survey results indicate that this is not a significant problem in Louisiana and that most visually impaired public school students are in regular classes with specialized instruction in resource rooms.

2. Residential Placement--Although the great majority of LSVI parents were pleased with LSVI services, the primary reason for placement at LSVI was not because LSVI offered the best program, but because services and equipment were unavailable or inadequate in the local school district. Two-thirds said that they would have kept the child at home if the local school system had offered appropriate services.

Normalization

With respect to achieving a normal life after graduation, GSRI's surveys of LSVI and public school graduates revealed the following:

1. Most LSVI graduates have never been employed and most are not seeking work. The employment record of public school graduates is somewhat better, but many are unemployed and not seeking work. However, a large majority in both groups expect to be employed in the future.

2. One-fourth of the public school graduates are married, but none of the LSVI graduates (though one had previously been married). A majority of the unmarried in both groups expect to be married in the future, with the public school graduates indicating a higher degree of expectation.

3. Half of the public school graduates and slightly less than half of the LSVI graduates live with parents or other family. The public school graduates show a higher degree of independent (i.e., apart from parents) living, primarily

because one-fourth are married. A large majority of both groups expect to live independently in the future.

4. There is a substantial amount of outdoor recreation activity among both groups.

5. Large majorities of both groups travel independently in their neighborhoods and cities and to other cities. LSVI graduates are more mobile for the longer distances.

Summary

In summation, it can be said that graduates and parents of public schools and LSVI rated the State's visually impaired educational services highly, with the LSVI graduates and parents of LSVI students expressing dissatisfaction with the public school programs. In spite of these high ratings, there is much room for improvement. With respect to appropriate education, all groups cited deficiencies in the public schools with respect to teachers, equipment, and materials.

Regarding least-restrictive environment, the residential school was not the desired setting for most parents of LSVI students. They sent their children to LSVI because services were not available at the local level. The deficiencies in the public schools cited by these parents indicate that appropriate services could be provided through the public schools, but are not because of cost considerations. This point is confirmed in the Division of Special Educational Services' 1980 report, "An Assessment of Programs and Services for Visually Impaired Children in Louisiana," wherein 28 LEAs indicated that they sent children to LSVI because the LEA lacked personnel and could not justify additional costs given the low incidence of visual impairment.

The record with respect to normalization is not particularly good for either the LSVI graduates or the public school graduates. It should be noted that, in general, the LSVI graduates have higher degrees of visual impairment, so that the data (as reported in this document) should not be used for a comparative evaluation of educational settings. Unemployment among both groups is high, so that it is not surprising that at least half of both groups still live with their parents. Higher mobility among the LSVI graduates in spite of a higher degree of visual impairment may be indicative of training deficiencies within the public schools. High expectations with respect

to employment and independent living suggest that both groups have a good self image.

Some Comparisons

It is difficult to compare Louisiana to other states because there are few national databases and the information is burdened by widespread inaccuracies and vast differences in nomenclature and reporting procedures. It could be argued that this point is moot, because the Federal law sets standards for which interstate comparisons are irrelevant. However, the law was ambitious and expected funding was not forthcoming. Thus, the states are necessarily involved in a process that moves toward fulfillment of the law, none can be condemned for non-fulfillment, and interstate comparisons provide some measure of success.

From telephone conversations and state reports, it would appear that many states have increased the level of educational services available through the LEAs, and many have progressively removed the visually impaired from residential institutions and placed them in public schools, with the residential institutions generally retaining the multiply handicapped. Normalization remains a problem throughout the United States, but many communities have made a concerted effort to maximize opportunities for the handicapped to travel and engage in sports. Employment of the visually impaired is also a problem nationwide, but significant accomplishments have been made through pilot programs and "hire the handicapped" efforts.

Although Louisiana has shown some significant accomplishments within individual school systems and even within some regions, it cannot be said to have moved aggressively to implement the laws. The problem has not been lack of money. The State provides $4 million annually to LSVI and contributes to the educational expenses of the LEAs (not to mention numerous other State assistance programs). Indeed, the State is seriously considering the investment of $30 million in a new residential facility. Neither has there been a problem of lack of intelligence and commitment within the State Department of Education and other agencies, which have produced many fine regulations, policies, and proposals.

The major problems, which will be addressed in the following chapters, appear to be: (1) an understandable reluctance on the part of the LEAs to provide appropriate services to every child; (2) misallocation of resources (in the sense that State expenditures do not achieve the greatest good for the greatest number); (3) lack of an integrated service delivery program, which is the primary reason for misallocation of resources; and (4) fragmentation of authority, which is the primary reason for lack of integrated service delivery. Lastly, a context for action has been missing. Hopefully, this report will provide direction for the widespread enthusiasm of parents, interested citizens, organizations, agency personnel, and legislators to convey better educational services to the visually impaired in Louisiana.

IV. PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Although visually impaired students and their parents are pleased with the educational services provided by the State, Louisiana is not fully living up to its commitment to provide an appropriate education within a least-restrictive environment to each of its visually impaired children. The primary service deficiencies are: (1) an inadequate number of special education teachers serving the Local Education Agencies (LEAs); (2) insufficient in-service training for special education and regular teachers; and (3) insufficient equipment and materials in the LEAs. In addition, the entire educational effort is not leading to the desired end of normalization.

What can be done to improve this situation? The following chapters will address these problems and make recommendations for solutions within the context of a comprehensive, integrated service delivery system. The present chapter deals with three major program needs to resolve service deficiencies, and the next chapter addresses the future of the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired (LSVI). The following chapter brings the results of the two previous chapters together to describe the integrated system. The final chapter deals with attitudinal problems that must be resolved if the integrated system is to be conducive to normalization.

The major service delivery deficiencies are in the LEAs, and particularly in the rural parishes. Most of the negative comments by parents and students related to insufficiencies of teachers and teacher training, followed by inadequate equipment and materials. The number of comments with respect to teacher deficiencies is not surprising, since there are only 37 teachers serving the LEAs who are certified in the education of the visually impaired.

The rural LEAs, in particular, are caught in a difficult situation. Since visual impairment is a low-incidence handicap, the rural LEAs may see only a few visually impaired students in a decade. Special education services are costly, many parishes are not wealthy, and the Federal government has not provided the expected resources. The parishes must deal with the service needs of other handicapped

groups, and they are generally confronted by calls for improved education for the non-handicapped population.

Such problems are not insurmountable, and many parishes could do better than they are presently doing. However, the LEAs can do little to improve the availability of special education teachers, and it is inefficient for each LEA to assume large costs for the education of only a few students. The present alternative is to send these children to LSVI for their entire educational program. But this approach flies in the face of the law and parental desires.

In order to fulfill its commitment, THE STATE MUST AGGRESSIVELY PURSUE THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED THROUGH THE LEAS. This will require increased teacher training, better provision of materials and equipment, and resolution of the low-incidence problem.

Regional Centers

The low-incidence problem can be resolved only through the inclusion of regional service components in the integrated service delivery system. Regionalization of service delivery has already been implemented successfully in many states; the Education of Exceptional Children Act encourages regional efforts; there is already at least one successful regional operation in the State; and the idea is being tested elsewhere. Therefore, THE STATE SHOULD IMPLEMENT A REGIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TO THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED THROUGH ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL CENTERS IN THE METROPOLITAN AREAS. This recommendation is an expansion of "Satellite Itinerant Centers for the Visually Handicapped in Louisiana," a proposal prepared by Billie Levy (former Supervisor of Programs for the Visually Impaired in the State Department of Education) and Jimmy Noblit (resource-itinerant teacher for the visually impaired in Calcasieu Parish schools).

These centers would not have any residential capacity, and they would be housed in existing facilities (e.g., in Louisiana Learning Resources System facilities). Although they would be called centers, their primary function would not be to draw others to them, but rather to serve in an outreach capacity by providing services within the school systems of surrounding parishes. Each center would have, at a

minimum, two certified teachers of the visually impaired. One could function as an in-service trainer of special education and regular classroom teachers, and the other could function as a special education teacher to meet educational needs that cannot be carried out in the regular classroom setting; or else the two could serve both functions as itinerant teacher-consultants. Both of these functions would be carried out in the regular schools, not in the regional centers.

All LEAs would have access to and contact with certified teachers to assist in the planning and provision of appropriate curriculums and resource materials and for consultation with parents, regular classroom teachers, and special education teachers. Assessments and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) could be prepared and continuously evaluated at the regional level, and data on each student's status and progress could be maintained. By centralizing data, each child's needs and progress can be more expeditiously met and monitored by those at the local level responsible for meeting those needs.

Interaction with parents is much more likely to occur, providing benefits to all involved in the educational process. Parent training can be conducted through the regional facilities, encouraging the parents of visually impaired children to form support groups, as well as teaching skills that could be used at home to strengthen the child's educational progress. This type of program can greatly alleviate parental misgivings about the visually impaired child's abilities and potentials. It can also reduce feelings of isolation by providing parents of visually impaired children the opportunity to associate with one another.

Community education and involvement are two additional benefits that can be obtained more easily at the regional level. Because students from many communities in surrounding LEAs will be receiving services through the regional center, more communities are apt to become aware of the center's existence and functions. An increase in volunterism can be expected from increased awareness, allowing center staff to devote more time to student needs and volunteers to gain a better understanding of what the visually impaired can accomplish.

Equipment and Materials

Deficiencies of equipment and materials are caused in part by underutilization. Networking among regional centers will help to resolve this problem. However, there are also many absolute deficiencies. The regional centers will be in a good position to identify local needs and to direct the LEAs to those places where equipment can be obtained. In addition, each center should have an aide/secretary who would be responsible for brailling, typing large-print materials, and performing regular secretarial duties. Equipment and materials that would be housed at each center would include an opticon, large-print typewriter, electric brailler, manual braillers, tape recorders, cassettes, low-vision aids, talking calculators, braille and large-print dictionaries, braille encyclopedia, braille paper, wide-line paper, and slate and stylus.

Teachers

One of the greatest problems that the State must face in delivering services through the LEAs is an insufficiency in the absolute number of certified teachers of the visually impaired and inadequate in-service training for certified and regular classroom teachers. During the 1985-86 school year, the LEAs employed 37 fully certified and four temporarily certified teachers of the visually impaired. These 41 teachers were clustered, for the most part, in 19 parish and one city school systems (Figure 2). Only two of the fully certified teachers are also certified to teach orientation and mobility. In addition, there are 40 certified teachers at LSVI.

As a consequence, THE STATE SHOULD INCREASE THE LEVEL OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND IMPLEMENT MEASURES TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CERTIFIED TEACHERS OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED. The existence of regional centers would meet most of the in-service training needs, since itinerant teacher-consultants would be operating through the centers to take care of the training needs of regular classroom and special education teachers. But where will the teachers who are to be employed

*Circled numbers indicate teachers with temporary certification.

Sources: Louisiana Learning Resources System and Gulf South Research Institute.

Figure 2. Distribution of Teachers of the Visually Impaired

through the regional centers as well as the additional teachers needed in the LEAs come from?

There are no established programs in the State leading to certification in the education of the visually impaired. There have been some short-term programs, but these have been directed to already certified teachers seeking additional certification in the field of visual impairment. Teachers may be provided temporary certification provided that they continue to take the coursework required for certification. In the absence of formal training programs, this is difficult. Because of low salary schedules, the State finds it difficult to compete for teachers nationally, which are in scarce supply anyway.

Given the modified role for LSVI that will be described in Chapter V, it would be hoped that some of the LSVI teachers would become itinerant teacher-consultants in the regional centers. In addition, special education curriculums already exist in universities throughout the State. Therefore, it is not necessary to create new programs, but merely to modify existing ones. LSVI should have a few people on staff with sufficient qualifications to be acceptable to a local university as trainers. If it is not possible to establish a university-based program, the State should supply stipends to teachers and students interested in attending approved out-of-state programs to work toward certification. Lastly, the State should mount a recruitment campaign and provide special incentives for entering the area of education of the visually impaired, since, for various reasons, interest in such a career is presently not high in the United States.

V. THE FUTURE OF LSVI

If services are increased dramatically through the Local Education Agencies (LEAs), needed teachers are acquired, and regional centers are established, what should the role of the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired (LSVI) be in the new service delivery system?

National Factors

Since LSVI is operating in the context of national factors, these factors must be reviewed before considering the character of LSVI itself.

Enrollment Trends

According to the American Printing House for the Blind, 12 percent of the U.S. legally blind school age population was in state residential facilities in 1985 compared to 38 percent in 1970, and 88 percent was in local schools in 1985 compared to 62 percent in 1970 (Table 1). During the course of this study, all state departments of education were contacted. Most states have proceeded rapidly to remove the visually impaired from residential facilities, with the residential facilities generally retaining the visually impaired with other handicapping conditions.

Table 1. U.S. Legally Blind Students

	Residential Schools		Public Schools	
Year	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1970	7,951	38	12,812	62
1975	7,561	30	17,915	70
1980	6,848	21	25,715	79
1985	4,708	12	33,547	88

Sources: American Printing House for the Blind; and Gulf South Research Institute.

Evaluation

These trends are not the result of failures on the part of residential schools as educational institutions. Their deficiencies are

intrinsic to the institutional setting and have long been recognized, as, for example, by Samuel Gridley Howe in an address delivered at the laying of the cornerstone of the New York State Institution for the Blind in 1866:

> All great establishments in the nature of boarding schools, where the sexes must be separated; where there must be boarding in common, and sleeping in congregate dormitories; where there must be routine, and formality, and restraint, and repression of individuality; where the charms and refining influences of the true family relation cannot be had,--all such institutions are unnatural, undesirable, and very liable to abuse. We should have as few of them as possible, and those few should be kept as small as possible.

If anything, it could be argued that the residential school offers better educational programs than the local school districts. Very little research has been done on this matter, but a study by Gary Coker, which appeared in the Fall 1979 issue of Education of the Visually Handicapped, is suggestive. Coker compared the academic achievement of 20 legally blind students in grades three through six in residential schools in the Southeast and Midwest to a similar group in day schools. He found that academic achievement did not differ at the third-grade level, but declined for the day school students in grades four through six, so that by the sixth grade, day school students were significantly behind their residential counterparts in academic achievement.

The concern is not with the educational services afforded by residential schools, but with the potential for personal and social maladjustment in the institutional setting. Although many studies have addressed the consequences of institutionalization for various handicapping conditions, only a few have looked at the effect of the residential setting on visually impaired children. Studies by R.M. McGuinness (1970) and R. Schindele (1974), both of which appeared in the American Foundation for the Blind Research Bulletin, are illustrative.

McGuinness compared the social maturity of blind children in the fourth through sixth grades who had been exposed to itinerant teacher, regular school, and special school educational settings. He found

that the scores of all three groups were generally lower than sighted norms, but that children from the itinerant teacher and regular school settings showed higher social maturity scores than those from the special school setting. McGuinness discussed the latter result in terms of the relative lack of contact of children in the special school with age-appropriate social behavior and the greater availability of special help in the special school setting that might lead to reduced need by the children to "work out problems for themselves."

Schindele compared the social adjustment of fifth-grade and sixth-grade sighted children to two groups of blind subjects, one from residential schools and one from regular schools. He found no differences in social adjustment between the residential and regular school blind students or either blind group and the sighted group. However, closer analysis revealed a negative relationship of adjustment to age (the older children were less well adjusted) in the residential school groups and a positive relationship in the regular school group. Schindele suggested that "while the social adjustment of visually handicapped students in regular schools has developed in a realistic surrounding, the social adjustment of the visually handicapped in a residential school is mainly the result of being brought up in a sheltered and unrealistic environment. In this case the good social adjustment of these children might be seriously affected as they grow older and especially when they have to leave the residential school."

The results of these studies of educational achievement and social adjustment, though far from definitive, are compatible with what one might expect. It should be expected that institutions that have been created for the education of the visually impaired should do better than a random selection of day schools. This, of course, does not indicate that particular day schools do not have the capacity to render equal or better educational services to the visually handicapped than residential schools (Coker says nothing about the quality of services for visually impaired children in the schools from which his sample was taken). It should also be expected that the modern residential school would not have highly adverse effects on the socialization and mental

health of children (who are resilient and respond well to supportive environments), but that long-term institutionalization is harmful.

Emergent Problems

The residential schools are being depopulated in favor of the local schools. Mainstreaming is a long-term trend in the United States resulting from a strong social movement. Public Law 94-142 reflected this movement and has greatly accelerated processes that were already underway. As the residential schools are progressively depopulated, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to maintain high-quality educational programs.

The full brunt of Public Law 94-142 has not yet been felt. It should be remembered that the law ties the concept of "least-restrictive environment" to handicapping conditions and that what constitutes the most normal environment in which an appropriate education can be provided for each handicapping condition is an empirical question. It has been demonstrated in many places throughout the United States that an appropriate education can be provided at the local level for every type of visual impairment, including the multiply handicapped for whom visual impairment is the primary handicapping condition. Put negatively, there are no categories of visual impairment in which visual impairment is the primary handicapping condition for which the residential setting constitutes the least-restrictive environment.

Thus, a strict interpretation of the law would make it impossible for the residential school to be considered the primary educational setting for any visually impaired child. The law would allow for specialized services on a short-term basis to be conducted in the residential school, but the traditional role of the residential school as an establishment for educating the visually impaired from kindergarten through high school would disappear. Under such pressures, many states are seeking new roles for their residential facilities.

Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired

This section of the chapter discusses the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired--its enrollment, cost, quality, and options and the role that it should take within a comprehensive, integrated service

delivery program for the education of the visually impaired in Louisiana.

Enrollment

Although LSVI traces its heritage back to 1852, the present school did not come into existence until 1978 with the consolidation of the Louisiana School for the Blind and the Southern University School for the Blind. The original population in 1978 was 181, but many students were found to be ineligible and were discharged during the first two years.

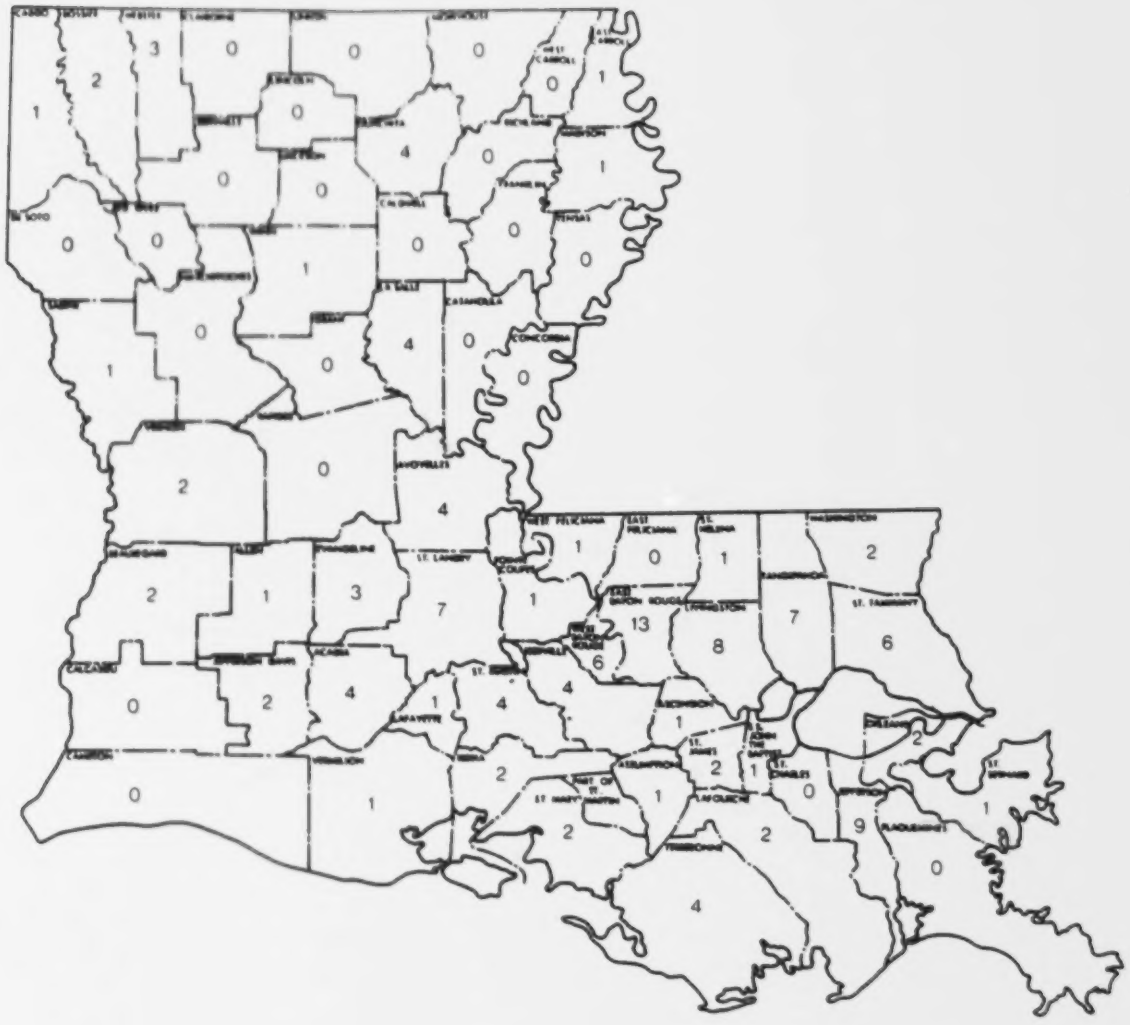
As can be seen from Table 2, the school has experienced a gradual decline in the number of its residential students and day students (who are from East Baton Rouge and nearby parishes). During the 1985-86 school year there were 116 students, 29 of whom were day students. Of the 116, about one-fifth were partially sighted (the rest being legally or totally blind), and 16 percent were multiply handicapped.

Table 2. LSVI Enrollment

School Year	Residential	Day	Total
1980-81	100	53	153
1981-82	92	54	146
1982-83	96	45	141
1983-84	85	40	125
1984-85	82	30	112
1985-86	87	29	116
1986-87 (estimated)	80	20	100

Sources: Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired; and Gulf South Research Institute.

Figure 3 shows the home parish of these students. As can be seen from the figure, LSVI draws most of its residential population from parishes that do not contain large cities. The anomalies are Ouachita and Jefferson parishes, both of which contain large population centers and both of which have a significant number of children at LSVI. The large numbers from East Baton Rouge and surrounding parishes are not



Sources: Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired; and Gulf South Research Institute.

Figure 3. Distribution of LSVI Students

indicative of residential status, since these parishes are the source of LSVI's day students.

Day students in residential facilities are not uncommon in the United States, though they are a state cost that confers special benefits to the immediate geographic area in which the facility is located. Day students at LSVI attend as a matter of convenience and parental judgment of quality. GSRI's survey of parents of LSVI students did not uncover any cases in which a family moved to the Baton Rouge area to make use of LSVI.

Cost

LSVI's annual budget (see Appendix D) is approximately $4 million, almost all of which is a direct appropriation from the State general fund. Salaries account for about three-fourths of the budget. LSVI has 118 fulltime equivalent positions authorized in the budget, with 40 fulltime instructors. During the 1985-86 school year, the student:teacher ratio was about 3:1 and the cost per student was about $33,000. The cost per pupil will increase to $40,000 next year if the recommended budget is accepted and LSVI has only 100 students.

Evaluation

LSVI is an excellent school according to the parents of students in attendance at LSVI last year (with nine out of 10 expressing satisfaction or a high degree of satisfaction with present programs). LSVI is a positive attractant to one out of every four parents, who placed their children in LSVI because it was judged to offer the best and most comprehensive programs. On the other hand, three out of every four parents placed their children in LSVI because services were unavailable or inadequate in the local school system, and two-thirds would have kept their child at home if the local school system had offered adequate services.

Graduates of LSVI also rate the school highly, with 31 out of 34 expressing satisfaction or a high degree of satisfaction. The high ratings related primarily to "teachers who care." The record with respect to educational outcomes, however, is not very impressive. Twenty-one of 35 have never been employed, and 24 of 34 are currently unemployed (only five of whom are seeking work). Only 15 live

independently. However, most expect to be employed and to live independently.

Similar findings on outcome were made by John Best in his 1980 report LSVI: Past, Present, and Future. Best surveyed 25 former students of the two schools that were consolidated to form LSVI and found that only a third had no difficulty in obtaining employment and that nearly half felt that the residential school did not adequately prepare them to obtain and hold a good job. More than half were found to be dependent (using various measures of independence such as travel), 24 percent felt that the school had not prepared them to lead a full and happy life, 36 percent felt that the school had not provided the skills needed to function independently, 60 percent felt that the school had not equipped them to travel independently, and 60 percent felt that the school had not equipped them for married life. Thirty-six percent said that the school had not prepared them for a full and rewarding life, and 44 percent said that they were not able to live the kind of life that they wanted to live.

Some of Best's findings can be disregarded because the responses are normal and do not entail problems specifically related to visual impairment (e.g., schools are not in business to prepare people for a full and rewarding life). Nevertheless, deficiencies in normalization are apparent. Best concluded that new and expanded programs and a new facility were needed for LSVI to achieve normalization of its graduates, but he does not show why the improvements would be efficacious. One could assume from the evidence in Best's and CSRI's surveys that there are intrinsic deficiencies in the residential setting, but this assumption would be incorrect. Whatever may be the overall differences between the residential and public school settings, neither has been eminently successful in normalization in Louisiana or elsewhere in the United States.

One is, therefore, forced to realize that the problem of normalization of the visually impaired is more fundamental than institutional differences. An obvious conclusion is that visual impairment is a severe handicap, and we should not expect much success in normalization from any institutional setting. However, this

conclusion is incompatible with the widespread and increasing successes of even totally blind persons in leading normal lives. Apparently, the problem is not in the institution or the handicap, but lies at a deeper and more pervasive level. This issue will be dealt with in the last chapter.

Models

C.W. Bledsoe in an article on "The Family of Residential Schools" (in the American Association of Workers for the Blind's Blindness 1971) identified three distinct types of residential schools:

1. The classic type is the school that has kept rather strictly to its purpose of educating the visually impaired from kindergarten through high school.
2. The center type has modified this original pattern a great deal to become a kind of center with special services for the visually impaired, but aggressive in propelling students into learning experiences outside the residential setting.
3. The hospital type specializes in serving the multiply handicapped visually impaired and is fast on its way to becoming a hospital school.

Since Bledsoe's article appeared, a new type has been identified, which one might call the resource center. The resource center is an outgrowth of Bledsoe's center type, but with a heavy emphasis on outreach. It assures that the residential school is not only a part of a continuum of services, but that it is heavily involved in offering assistance to many components of the continuum. The resource center type has been described by Jonathan McIntire in an article on "The Future Role of Residential Schools for Visually Impaired Students" (in the Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness, April 1985) and could include:

- Diagnostic and assessment services
- Short-term intensive instruction in specialized areas such as literary braille, nemeth code, orientation and mobility, and utilization of low-vision aids
- Summer school programs focusing on college preparation, specialized courses, and career education
- Vocational evaluation and training
- Material and equipment lending

- Preschool (early intervention) programming and counseling
- Adult education programs
- Respite care programs
- Living facilities for secondary level students who attend public programs locally due to the unavailability of support services in their rural home environments
- Technical consultation to local and regional education programs on curriculum, instructional strategies, specialized material and equipment needs, assessments, etc.
- Personnel training at both the preservice and in-service level
- Research and development.

Options

LSVI is presently a mixture of the classic type, the center type, and the hospital type. It looks upon itself primarily as the center type and has aspirations to increase services to the multiply handicapped. John Best's 1980 report, LSVI: Past, Present, and Future, advocates the addition of resource center components, so that LSVI would be four types in one. The recommendation to assimilate four different essences has been carried forward in an unpublished "Scope of Services" proposal prepared by LSVI.

What should LSVI be? Should it model itself on the classic type, the center type, the hospital type, or the resource center type, or should it attempt to combine all four? The latter approach, though it might provide greater scope for securing pupils to populate LSVI, would insure that the organization lacked a unified purpose. No organization should have more than one purpose. The conflict between programs designed to educate the visually impaired and those designed to educate the multiply handicapped is already emerging as an issue (as was indicated in GSRI's survey of the parents of LSVI students).

What of the classic type? It can only be said that the period of long-term education of the visually impaired in residential schools is over. McIntire, who is an advocate of residential schools, issues the following warning:

> There are those in our field who cling to the hope that the rapid changes of the past two decades may be reversed, that the residential schools for the blind as they have been known in the past

will survive. Although there may be a temporary reprieve due to the current economic and political forces at work, this will be short-lived. Parents, the courts, advocates, handicapped citizens themselves, educators, and society, as represented by their elected legislative bodies, will not allow the tremendous gains made by special education to be lost. The educational, economic and social benefits of having blind children educated in the local public schools are too obvious.

There might be an opportunity for LSVI to pursue the classic model by reversing its declining enrollment through aggressive recruiting, since GSRI's surveys indicate that many parents and many of the visually impaired did not know of the existence of LSVI or that it was an alternative. However, such an action would be regressive. It would attempt to escape the force of law and oppose a strong social movement. It would be incompatible with the desires of parents (even the desires of LSVI parents), and it could never succeed if the proposal in this report to increase service delivery through the LEAs were implemented.

The center type is far more conformable to the law and current trends, but still stands in some tension with them. Its primary problem is that it assumes that the residential school is the focus of educational services to the visually impaired and that its function is to control the movement of students into the LEAs. The recommendation in this report to increase services through the LEAs is grounded on the principle that the LEAs should be the focus of service delivery. In addition, aggressive pursuit of mainstreaming through the center type will ultimately result in its transformation into the resource center type.

Many residential schools throughout the United States are placing their hopes in the multiply handicapped visually impaired. McIntire even goes so far as to say that residential schools for the visually impaired should serve students who are not visually impaired but have other handicapping conditions. Concentration on the multiply handicapped visually impaired may offer some short-term possibilities, but it will eventually cause the residential schools to be caught in the same quandary as they are now. It has been demonstrated that visually impaired children with other handicaps can receive an appropriate

education in the local schools, and some states have already begun to advance in the direction of removing such children from residential schools. In addition, concentration on the multiply handicapped eventually causes the hospital type school to become more of a hospital and less of a school, which is hardly compatible with the traditional interests and expertise of institutions such as LSVI.

Proposals

In the literature on the education of the visually impaired, there is much talk about a continuum of services. However, most states do not provide a continuum, with clearly defined roles for the various service deliverers; rather, they are characterized by competition between service deliverers, with an emphasis on turf building rather than the provision of services. Even the establishment of a continuum is insufficient because the idea of a continuum assumes a discrete population for each service delivery type.

This report aims at the description of a comprehensive, integrated service delivery system in which the educational needs of the child are the main concern. It places responsibility for the long-term education of the visually impaired in the hands of the LEAs, where it largely exists in fact and ought to belong; and it proposes regional centers to resolve the problem of low incidence in the rural parishes. However, it is not overly concerned with institutional structures, which are a necessary but not a sufficient condition for service delivery. The educational needs of visually impaired children are too complex and fluid to be relegated to any particular institutional setting and can only be fulfilled through flexibility on the part of service delivery mechanisms and a firm intention to provide an appropriate education.

Does LSVI have any place in a comprehensive, integrated service delivery system for the education of the visually impaired? The answer to this question is both yes and no--no with respect to its traditional role, yes with respect to a new role. LSVI contains a wealth of resources in personnel, equipment, physical plant, and budget; but these resources are concentrated on a small and diminishing population. It is in the State's interest to extend these resources to a larger

population, not only of service beneficiaries, but also service deliverers.

LSVI SHOULD BE TRANSFORMED INTO A RESOURCE CENTER WITH SHORT-TERM RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS. This would entail divesting itself of operations oriented on the classic model and not pursuing the hospital model. The resource center type is an outgrowth of the center type, which engages in aggressive mainstreaming. LSVI currently looks upon its role primarily in terms of the center type, which under current pressures has a natural tendency to move toward the resource center type. As a consequence, the transition to a new role would not be as difficult as it might first appear.

It is not the purpose of this report to describe in detail what LSVI would look like as a resource center. The concept is new, and states that are moving in this direction are experimenting. It would be unreasonable at this point to attempt to describe an elaborate program for a resource center, since firm conclusions could be reached only through an effort of analysis that lies far beyond the scope of this study. In any case, it is pointless to pursue details unless the basic concept is first deemed acceptable.

At its core, the resource center would have three components:

1. Short-term intensive training in reading and communication and orientation and mobility. The center would accommodate about 15 visually impaired children at any one time. Students would be enrolled generally for a school semester and for a maximum of nine months on a rotating basis and returned to their local schools after specific competencies had been demonstrated. The students' academic needs could be taken care of (whenever possible) during this period by mainstreaming in the East Baton Rouge Parish school system.
2. Summer programs of a wide variety, including recreational, daily living skills, career education, and confidence building (such as historic reviews of role models and lectures by successful visually impaired businessmen, professionals, and blue-collar workers).
3. A wide variety of outreach services, which could include diagnostic and assessment services, preschool programming and counseling, parental education, teacher training (at LSVI through a university program), inservice training (through the regional centers), and technical consultation to local and regional education programs on curriculum, instructional strategies, specialized material and equipment needs, etc.

In accepting this new role, LSVI SHOULD RELINQUISH ITS LONG-TERM EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND ATTENDANT LONG-TERM RESIDENTIAL CARE. This could be done by:

1. Prohibiting new admissions to LSVI for such long-term programs.
2. Engaging in more aggressive mainstreaming in the East Baton Rouge Parish school system of children presently enrolled at LSVI.
3. Gradually removing the LSVI population back to their local school districts, beginning first with the non-multiply handicapped.

No action of this type should be undertaken until previous recommendations of this report have been implemented and each child is assured of an appropriate education within his local school.

The new role for LSVI would require a different orientation, which should be reflected in a name change. LSVI should become the Louisiana Visually Impaired Resource Center (VIRC). It would have programs not offered elsewhere, reflecting its distinctive competencies, which would make it part of a service delivery continuum. Through its outreach programs, it would be part of a true service delivery system, establishing the "cooperative bond" that Natalie Barraga has called for (in an interview in Education of the Visually Handicapped, Summer 1985) between the residential and public schools.

These recommendations should be accepted because they offer the most appropriate course of action for the State to establish a comprehensive, integrated service delivery system whose sole objective is the delivery of educational services to visually impaired children. They should be accomplished expeditiously if the State is to assume a leadership role in resolving internal problems and serving as a model for other states. Lastly, they should be accomplished for the sake of LSVI. The legal and social forces that have given rise to these recommendations will not disappear but will, in fact, gain increasing strength. If LSVI does not accept a new role, it will eventually disappear after a long period of acrimonious debate.

Facility

The Best report advocated the building of a new facility for LSVI on the basis of assumed enrollment increases, maintenance of traditional roles, acceptance of an additional role as a resource center, structural problems with the old facility, inadequate access, and fear of crime. Costs of the new facility were estimated at $22 million in 1981, increasing to $30 million in Best's 1985 report, LSVI: A Reassessment. Best maintains that the building of a new facility is imperative. However, GSRI's survey of LSVI graduates and parents of LSVI students did not reveal the same sense of need or urgency. Need for a new facility was expressed by a majority of both groups, but the support was not overwhelming; and the reasons generally related to desirability rather than to absolute need. The present report assumes a totally new role for LSVI. The facility implications of this new role are uncertain and will need to be worked out over time. Therefore, A NEW FACILITY SHOULD NOT BE BUILT AT THIS TIME.

VI. STRUCTURE AND AUTHORITY

The two previous chapters described measures for increased service delivery through the Local Education Agencies (LEAs), a regional delivery system, and a new role for the Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired (LSVI). These elements now need to be brought together to show how they would function as part of a comprehensive, integrated service delivery program, the institutional authority that would be needed to forge the elements into a unified system, and some estimate of costs.

The Program

The comprehensive, integrated program for the education of the visually impaired in Louisiana would have three major structural elements:

1. LEAs, which would have responsibility for the long-term education of the visually impaired.

2. Regional centers, which would engage in outreach efforts to the surrounding LEAs, including provision of itinerant-resource teachers for in-service training and special education and supply of equipment and materials.

3. A new Louisiana Visually Impaired Resource Center (VIRC), which would offer short-term intensive training and summer programs of a wide variety, as well as engaging in a number of outreach services.

None of these elements would be competing with each other for students. The new LSVI would be restricted to short-term training programs that, because of their required intensity, cannot be carried out adequately at the local level. The regional centers would not have any residential capacity and would act as a point of contact between the LEAs and VIRC. The regional centers and VIRC would focus their services on the needs of the LEAs, with the regional centers operating entirely through the LEAs and VIRC offering courses to supplement the educational activities of the LEAs. The system would be comprehensive in the sense of offering all of the needed services and integrated in that the focus would be on service delivery at the local level.

Authority

Interaction should extend backward and forward, with all elements operating in terms of the good of the visually impaired students. The designation of specific responsibilities oriented on a common end would itself produce, to a large degree, the needed continuity and interaction. However, as with most institutional forms whose activities must be coordinated, the necessary authority for insuring continuity and interaction must lie outside of the elements of the system.

The logical place for the governance of the whole system is within the Office of Special Educational Services of the Louisiana Department of Education. Therefore, THE REGIONAL CENTERS AND VIRC SHOULD BE PLACED UNDER THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION. An overall director responsible to the Assistant Superintendent would oversee the system. VIRC would require a fulltime director, and administration of the regional centers would be handled on a part-time basis by one of the itinerant-resource teachers within each center. With the change to an appointed State Superintendent of Education, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education would retain control of the new LSVI through the Office of Special Educational Services.

Interagency Cooperation

As part of the Department of Education, the Office of Special Educational Services is in a good position to coordinate VIRC and the regional centers with the LEAs. In addition, the Department of Education is responsible for the delivery of other services to the visually impaired population and is in close contact with other agency providers. If a service delivery program for the education of visually impaired children were implemented, this would be an ideal time to modify existing agency relationships to achieve higher degrees of delivery for other services to visually impaired children.

Interagency cooperative agreements need to be worked out among the various agencies providing services to the visually impaired. Such agreements can encourage greater service delivery by providing a structural base upon which personal cooperation can build. Cooperative

efforts and information sharing currently carried out are generally based on personal relationships between individuals in the different agencies.

Personnel turnover can inhibit cooperation by destroying informal working relationships established over time. Well-designed interagency cooperative agreements spelling out broad areas of agreed mutual effort and urging cooperation would facilitate the establishment of personal working relationships between field and administrative personnel in different agencies serving the visually impaired. The students would benefit from a more coordinated service delivery.

It is suggested that within the regions of the State, representatives from State agencies serving the legally blind share common office facilities. Thus, regional caseworkers from the Division of Blind Services of the Department of Health and Human Resources, itinerant teacher-consultants in the proposed regional delivery system, and the regional Louisiana Learning Resources System (LLRS) offices would all be housed in the same building. A shared secretarial staff would further promote integration and coordination of efforts. This would provide, in one regional setting, complete services to the blind children in the area.

Having the itinerant teachers based in the same facility as the regional depository for the LLRS would increase the efficiency and flexibility with which equipment and materials may be delivered to the teachers and students who need them. The early identification efforts of the Division of Blind Services would complement the Child Find efforts of the Department of Education. Early intervention and family counseling should be more informed and effective because of the opportunity for mutual consultation by workers from the several agencies. Children with visual impairments would be better prepared for school, and parents would be better informed and in a better position to help their children achieve academically.

Additionally, blind children would be more likely to receive timely aid from the Division of Blind Services if the caseworkers receive frequent reports from the child's itinerant teacher.

Situations that might impinge negatively on the child's academic career could be headed off or ameliorated.

Vocational preparation and placement of the blind is a central concern of the Division of Blind Services. Contact between caseworkers and itinerant teachers should help both groups to prepare students for eventual employment. Post-secondary educational, vocational, and life-skills training along with job search and placement would become more of a process rather than an abrupt transition for both students and agency personnel.

Although jobs are essential to normalization, the employment record of the visually impaired is not good in Louisiana or throughout the United States. Placement of students in regular classrooms in their communities may help to reduce this problem, since the visually impaired would have a wider range of contacts that might lead eventually to a job, and community attitudes with respect to the hiring of the visually impaired would improve through increased contact.

Nevertheless, the employment record of the visually impaired who attended public schools throughout the Nation is much less than ideal, so changes in educational settings cannot be expected to accomplish very much. In the context of the present efforts to improve educational services, the State should undertake an investigation of the vocational needs of the visually impaired, catalog its programs and evaluate their effectiveness, and review pilot programs in other states. In addition, if the proposals presented in this report are implemented, the interest that would be generated with respect to the visually impaired would offer a good opportunity for greater appeals to the hiring of the handicapped.

Communication

Communication of critical information about programs and possibilities is essential if visually impaired children are to make the most of their school years. The access of information by the blind generally requires more time than by the sighted. Delays in learning of a needed program or service can result in a child's education being extended for one or more years, resulting in increased emotional costs for the child and increased financial burden for the State.

Two suggestions are put forward to increase the information flow--not just among the professionals, but to and from parents as well. With modern word processing and printing equipment and low-cost mailing, a newsletter could be produced inexpensively. The newsletter would be short (one page), businesslike, and frequent (perhaps even monthly). Mailing lists would be made up of parents of visually impaired children, classroom teachers of visually impaired students, visually impaired-certified teachers, parish supervisors of special education, principals of schools with visually impaired students, Division of Blind Service caseworkers, advocacy groups, etc. Coordination for the newsletter could be carried out by the State Vision Consultant's office within the Office of Special Educational Services.

Also located in the Vision Consultant's office would be an incoming toll-free telephone line to expedite information requests or complaints from parents, teachers, or administrators in the field. This line could also be used to check on equipment and materials requests from LLRS. The guiding principle here is to make the information/communication/service system as "user friendly" as possible.

One of the most exasperating factors encountered in the present study was lack of data and difficulty in retrieving and using the data that was available. In order for programs to be well managed, there must be good information that is readily available to decision makers. It is therefore suggested that a desk-top computer of moderate capacity (such as an IBM-XT or AT) be allocated to the office of the State Vision Consultant to be used in tracking students, monitoring programs, and preparing and mailing newsletters. Use could easily be coordinated with others in the Office of Special Educational Services who provide services to the visually impaired.

Costs

The State has been generous in the allocation of monies for the education of the visually impaired. However, these resources have been concentrated on a small number of students attending the residential facility in Baton Rouge. The cost per pupil at LSVI during the 1985-86

school year was about $33,000 (which is comparable to residential costs in other states). Residential facilities are expensive in comparison to education through the LEAs, since the public must absorb costs of housing and meals that would normally be borne by the parents. The only cost advantages that can be demonstrated by residential facilities in relation to regular schools arise under circumstances in which there are many visually impaired scattered over wide geographic areas. Regional centers have been proposed to take care of this problem, insofar as it exists in Louisiana.

The modified role for LSVI would provide a considerable reduction in costs for that facility, although the costs for the new programs would still be substantial. As students are returned to the LEAs, costs of food and housing are sustained by the parents. The effect on the LEAs is not dramatic, except when it becomes necessary to hire additional teachers. Regionalization of service delivery will enable teacher costs to be spread among a number of LEAs, rather than being sustained by the individual LEA. Thus, the major cost of the service delivery program described in this report would be the new costs that would be incurred through the regional centers.

Regional centers would provide cost-effective service delivery, because they would be designed to maximize use of personnel and equipment. A proposal by Jimmy Noblit ("Satellite Itinerant Center for the Visually Impaired") costed a model center for Ruston at $31,500 annually (for a teacher, aide, and van maintenance), with one-time expenditures of $37,000 for equipment and materials (including a modified van). Costs for the regional centers described in this report would be higher, since at least one additional teacher and van would be required. However, annual costs should be under $100,000.

A portion of the center costs should be borne by the LEAs, but the majority of the costs should be borne by the State, since the centers will be operating under the authority of the Department of Education. A 60/40 State/LEA match would perhaps be appropriate. If there are eight regional centers and annual costs are estimated at $100,000 (which will vary, depending on the service needs in each region), the annual cost to the State would be $480,000, and the combined average

annual cost for the 64 parishes of the State would be about $320,000. The State cost could fall within the annual savings that would be gained through a modified role for LSVI, not to mention the proposed capital outlay for a new residential facility. However, there would be additional capital costs for equipment in the regional centers.

VII. SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

The previous chapters have dealt with the law, programs and policies, resources and institutions. These are important factors in the constitution of an appropriate service delivery system for the visually impaired, but they are only structural factors. Beyond structure lies the problem of the spirit that animates the system, and the root of that spirit is the attitude that we have toward visual impairment.

Whether Louisiana will pursue the foregoing recommendations and whether the implementation of such recommendations will result in a highly efficacious delivery system depends largely on our attitudes toward visual impairment and the visually impaired. Obviously, a report of this nature can only deal with a framework for action. The actual content of services will depend on parental action, the motives of service deliverers, and the treatment afforded by other students. Decisions at the micro level, which are the only ones experienced directly by individuals, will be dependent on attitudes.

As a consequence, this chapter addresses the social context of the education of the visually impaired. It deals with the attitudes that we have toward visual impairment and the visually impaired, how these attitudes are manifest in educational structure, and how these attitudes are reflected in the assumptions that the visually impaired have about themselves and their possibilities in life. Appropriate attitude is seen as the foundation for appropriate education in the extended sense; that is, an education that has the capacity to contribute to the highest quality of life.

This report makes a strong case for deinstitutionalization and a corresponding provision of services at the local level, partly because it is the law, partly because it reflects a strong social movement, and partly because it corresponds to parental desire. The law was created because of the social movement, and the social movement is a manifestation of the desires of individual parents.

Parental desires are quite simple: they want their children to be with them. Exceptions are permissible only when the needs of the child

are of such magnitude as to require parental sacrifice. In addition to the immediate desires of parents, there is a widespread assumption (for which there is much evidence) shared by parents and nonparents alike that the best place for the child is in the home and the best place for his socialization is within his community.

On the negative side, there is fear that institutionalization may have deleterious consequences apart from the denial of the positive aspects of home life. This could be the case even if institutionalization offered a better education, since parents must be concerned about the total, long-term good of their children, of which education is only one component. There is some evidence with respect to the negative effects of institutionalization on the socialization of the visually impaired; but the effect is not dramatic, the effect is apparently a result of long-term institutionalization, and there may be confounding factors (such as parental attitude).

Deinstitutionalization is not taking place because the residential schools have been found to be educationally deficient or extremely deleterious with respect to personal and social development. The drive for deinstitutionalization comes from parental desire to have the child at home and the desire of parents and others concerned with the visually impaired to achieve normalization for the visually impaired.

Normalization is the positive dimension of deinstitutionalization. It asserts that the handicapped child should not be identified with his handicap; that is, that the handicap should not be the point of attention. Rather, the point of attention should be the child's humanity, which he has to the same degree as everyone else. The handicap should be looked upon as a limitation whose consequences can be mollified or overcome.

There is a great difference between identifying a child with his handicap and identifying the child as a person with a handicap. Let three examples suffice:

Parent 1 says "My child is blind; he is teased by the other kids at school; he must be protected from the trials of life." Protective measures are taken and the child remains dependent on his parents for the rest of his life.

Parent 2 says "My child is blind, but he is intelligent and has skills that can be developed. I expect him to become self sufficient." Appropriate measures are taken and the child eventually goes to college, holds a job, and raises a family.

Teacher 1 says "This poor child is blind. I must pay special attention to him." The child (as happens with normal children under such circumstances) manipulates the concern and becomes a disciplinary problem. The teacher is unwilling to act, justifying the child's irrascibility in terms of his deprivation.

Teacher 2 says "This child is blind and requires special services to enable him to perform at the same level as my other students. But I expect from him the same effort and the same decorum as the rest of my students."

Child 1 says "I am blind, therefore I can't. . ."

Child 2 says "I am blind, but I can. . ."

Normalization as a social movement places the locus of value in the individual and steadfastly refuses to allow the individual to be encompassed by his handicap through social stereotyping. It asserts that the handicapped are like everyone else and that the intention of the education of the handicapped should be to enable the handicapped to function like everyone else insofar as the handicap allows.

Normalization (or integration) is, therefore, an attitude; and as an attitude, it can be operative within different institutional settings. Service deliverers in the residential setting are quite capable of intending the normalization of their students. On the other hand, public school training does not insure normalization, since the visually impaired can be coddled by his parents, rejected by his peers, and isolated in the classroom.

The reason that normalization has given rise to deinstitutionalization is that the residential setting is by its very nature abnormal, since it separates from home and community. To the

degree that local school districts can provide adequate services, the residential schools will be depopulated. This is as it should be.

The residential schools fulfilled an essential role as long-term care facilities when services were not available through the public schools. Unfortunately, the separation of the handicapped from society at large was itself conducive to stereotyping. The handicapped were assumed to be "different from us" because they were not encountered; and because they lived in remote institutions, this was assumed to be the appropriate place for them.

Thus, deinstitutionalization, if it is to be highly successful, must confront the need for changes in attitudes. With respect to the blind and visually impaired, the first step must be to declare that the blind and visually impaired are not handicapped.

A handicap in everyday discourse is a physical or emotional disability that makes normal achievement almost impossible. Blindness, and especially visual impairment, are not of this nature, since the blind and visually impaired are perfectly capable of learning, having friends, holding a job, living independently, marrying, raising children, voting, engaging in recreational activities, traveling, and so on. In short, they are perfectly capable of leading normal lives.

The blind and visually impaired have special problems, but not such as to make achievement in life prohibitively difficult. Blindness should be understood as an impediment (or hindrance) whose potential deleterious consequences for a normal life can be avoided or overcome. It becomes a handicap only through the attitude of others, lack of personal initiative (which is often a consequence of the attitude of others), or the unwillingness of society to provide remediative measures.

The second step is to change whatever incorrect attitudes are carried by parents, teachers, peers, and the visually impaired themselves. One of the best ways of achieving such a change is through examples and the presentation of role models. It is impossible, for example, once having read Helen Keller, to conceive of her as deprived. The blind teacher and the visually impaired businessman can be sources of inspiration.

The third step is to expect and demand high standards of educational attainment for the visually impaired, including eventual employment. At times such demands may appear cruel; but there is a greater cruelty in allowing visual impairment to become an excuse for nonattainment.

The fourth step is to institute high expectations in educational procedures. This would affect such things as when and how orientation and mobility training is conducted. Early training, insistence that the child orient himself, and denial of unneeded support lead to the self confidence required to make the skill useful.

APPENDIX A
ADVISORY PANEL RESPONSES

MEMORANDUM

TO: GSRI
FROM: Dr. Vic Baldwin
RE: Consultant Meeting on August 1
DATE: August 22, 1986

I think that the meeting at your office with the consultants was very productive. The consultants there represented a wide array of interests and expertise and therefore were able to provide various points of view on each problem. In general I felt that there was a concensus on the 10 provisional recommendations that you provided us.

In this memo I will summarize my reactions to each of the 10 recommendations. I will try to touch on the major points that I think should be considered for each of the recommendations as they are discussed more fully.

1. State Educational Policy for the Visually Impaired should be directed toward educational equity.

As you will recall the word educational equity got a considerable reaction from the consultants. I think I would encourage you to be cautious with the use of the word equity in the future. If equity is interpreted as meaning that we will make an attempt at offering some of the students some opportunities, then I think we've got a problem. If however equity means that all the educational services that are offered to a nonhandicapped student are equally available to a visually impaired student, then I think the statement is quite adequate. I know there will be several arguments regarding lack of financial resources but I don't think you want to get caught up in that argument because the law clearly states that lack of resources is not an excuse. You can't get in a position of recommending less than the best.

2. The state should aggressively pursue the provision of appropriate educational services for the visually impaired through the LEAs.

I think this is absolutely a mandatory recommendation and probably the center issue of the report. Everything I know about the field of visually impaired suggests that normally intelligent visually impaired students can be educated quite appropriately and also very effectively through local education agencies. On a nationwide basis there just isn't any excuse anymore to have our visually impaired students educated in a separate, segregated facility and deny them access to all the experiences and interactions

that are available to their non-vision impaired peers. Again, you will probably hear complaints about the ability of the LEAs to offer educational services. You mention it in a later recommendation, however the concept of a regional program that offers consultant help or itinerant teachers appears to work well in other parts of the country. I am well aware that there are a few educational activities that are extremely unique for the visually impaired student and therefore may have to be taught on a one-to-one basis. A good example is in the area of reading. Whether the student has to learn to read braille, which is the extreme case, or use large print is an educational issue that must be taken into consideration. There are probably blocks of time, particularly when a child is young, that he or she needs intensive educational work in the area of literacy and orientation and mobility. Literacy of course includes not only writing and reading but being able to express oneself. It is not necessary, however, to remove a student from their natural environment to a segregated facility for extended periods of time, such as ten years, to receive that training. The instruction can occur over short intensive periods with an opportunity to practice their skills in a more natural environment. Recommendation #3 gets at this issue in more detail.

3. The state should establish a regional delivery system for educational services to the visually impaired.

Other states have done this quite effectively and there is no reason that Louisiana can't do the same. A regional delivery system does not mean establishing a series of centers which house the students. The regional delivery system must be made up of a core of staff that has expertise in teaching the visually impaired students and can offer their services on a consultant basis to regular teachers in the public school system. They need to act as consultants and train others to carry out their programs. For many teachers this is foreign ground. Particularly experts like those who are trained to work with the visually impaired, are traditionally not used to the idea of being able to show others how to do what they do. This traditionally means that they will have to go into the school and design a program for each individual student and then show other persons how to conduct that program while they monitor and update the program as needed. This is the teacher/consultant model and it can work very effectively. It will require that these consultant teachers be data based and therefore monitor the progress very carefully of each of their students. If they are collecting appropriate data then these data can be used to make the right educational decisions without letting

the student flounder for long periods of time. Organizing such a regional program will require a considerable amount of changes at the state level. These programs have to be coordinated and therefore centralized. Your 9th recommendation deals with the issue of centralization and certainly impacts on this concept of a regional delivery system. Some single organization in the state needs to be responsible for coordinating the educational programs through these regional resource centers. My recommendation would be that that responsibility should rest with the State Department of Education. This is extremely important since the people that the Regional Resource Center staff will be training are regular educators who work in the state educational system at the local education agency level.

4. The state should increase the level of inservice training.

Obviously this recommendation is going to be extremely important. If in fact you move to a regional program whereby most of the services are delivered at the LEA level, then those teachers are going to need a great deal of inservice training. Most of the training initially will probably revolve around awareness issues and basically trying to convince them that they can adequately educate a visually impaired student. The other type of inservice training that will be required is for the people in the regional centers to offer specific types of inservice training dealing with particular issues such as how to assist in orientation and mobility, how to use the various apparatuses that are often required for reading, on how to present material so it is usable by all students. Who is going to deliver this inservice training will become an issue. If you don't already have a regional set of programs in place then you probably don't have a lot of trainers on hand. You pointed out in the meeting that there is not a lot of expertise available through the university or college system and therefore initially you may have to either import some staff or possibly utilize the existing knowledge resources at LSVI to make them trainers. Along these lines it seems to me that if you establish these regional programs and need access to immediate expertise, you are probably going to have to rely on the staff at LSVI anyway. I would encourage you, however, to have that training conducted off campus. I think is one of the initial steps in breaking the chain of the importance of having a centralized residential facility. It is also quite conceivable to me that you could attract the attention of one of your institutions of higher education to become involved in this activity if they can be shown that the potential number of students is sizeable and that there is some monetary

incentive. There are monies at your State Department of Education that could be earmarked for this through the availability of the state's portion of the Part B monies. By using the existing LSVI staff to assist you in initial inservice training activities you have probably also made a wise political move. Without question these staff are going to be threatened and to use them in a training capacity to insure them of their importance is probably an extremely important step. If they can see themselves as trainers of others in spreading their expertise across a larger number of people rather than direct service providers you have made a quantum leap.

5. The state should provide stipends for teachers and students to attend approved out-of-state programs to work toward certification or a degree in the area of visually impaired.

Initially this may be required if as you say there are no in-state programs. I can't believe that enough seed money couldn't be offered to a university to entice them to develop such a program. Even if it means bringing one staff member to the university on a one-year appointment it should be possible to get this process started. There must be some staff at LSVI that would have sufficient qualifications to be acceptable to a university as a trainer. It would also be important to look into the certification requirements in your state and to see how many of those already exist in terms of present courses available at the various universities. At that point you are only needing to train in those additional courses that are needed to meet certification requirements. If you start this through an inservice program initially you can probably turn it into a preservice or degree program at a later time. At least in our state it is easy for a person who already has a teaching certificate to get an additional certification in teaching the visually impaired by taking a sequence of additional classes. As your regional programs expand I think you will find the need to develop a quality preservice program, but I would use the information regarding the amount of inservice training that is required right now to build a case later for the need for a preservice program. Again, I encourage you to keep in mind that you probably have quite a bit of expertise available out at the LSVI facility and if you can encourage those people to become an integral part of the training procedures you probably will have a better chance of getting them to agree that this is the best way to go.

6. LSVI's full term residential program should be phased out.

This is also a very important recommendation and can assure you that it wil be misinterpreted. Sooner or later your newspaper is going to report headlines that you guys have recommended closing the School for the Blind. Regardless of what other words you use to assure people that you have given it a great deal of thought it won't matter because the sensationalism of closing the School for the Blind and turning those poor people loose on the streets are something that newspapers like to write about. If you start a phase out program you want to be sure that you have assured people, particularly parents, that you are not sending any student from LSVI out to the doorstep of an LEA without appropriate support systems in place. No matter what you say they are going to believe that you want to dump the kids so you need to have a plan in hand that talks about transitioning students from LSVI to a very appropriate and fully supported program in a LEA. One of the ways that we have accomplished movement in that direction here is that we basically have shut down any incoming students into the Oregon School for the Blind and therefore letting it die a slow death. Your phase out team or people who gather to make the decision about who gets phased out of that school and over to an LEA, should be made up of a combination of people including those from LEAs. I think one of the key words in your recommendation is full term. As you know I have advocated strongly for the establishment of a Vision Education Center. The center that I have proposed does have some residential programs associated with it but nobody can stay at that center on a residential basis past a six-month period without having returned to their natural environment. The concept here is that people can come from the school district for short-term intensive work on a particular academic item and then return home to practice it. Therefore the need for full term residential programs is virtually out of the question but you may need some smaller facility to handle short-term residential programs. You must also remember one of the issues that was raised regarding the quality of these short-term programs. If in fact a student is trying to meet graduation requirements at their high school then the courses offered and the training offered at the residential center have to be equivalent to those offered around the state. If a student goes there for a long period of time and isn't getting a full academic program then you have impaired their ability to graduate. I think that is another good reason for having short-term intensive training programs with a return to the school. However, you can see the seriousness of impairing a student's ability to graduate and therefore I wonder if these programs couldn't be

conducted some place other than at a central site, for example, maybe it could occur at several sites around the state near to the student's home. I don't think that these programs have to be terribly fancy in terms of facilities and as a matter of fact it might be possible to use the student's own school and bring several students together at one time for a particular training. Certainly the summer is a time that could be used for intensive "camps" or training programs.

7. LSVI should be developed into a resource center with short-term residential programs.

This recommendation obviously is very closely related to the previous one and that answers are basically the same. I would recommend that you consider utilizing the facility of several of the LEAs around the state as possible short-term residential sites also. Maybe you could even make arrangements with some of the local students to have these other visiting visually impaired students stay at their house for a period of time while they were getting the short-term intensive training. You might even want to consider the concept of the exchange student.

8. A new LSVI facility should not be built at this time.

I think this is fairly obvious and doesn't need much more discussion.

9. Authority for service provision needs to be centralized.

If your regional program and your vision education center or residential short-term training organization are under separate leadership, you can expect serious problems. In this state the person who is the director for the regional programs also has the superintendent of the School for the Blind answering to him. The overall director is also an employee of the State Department of Education answering directly to one of the assistant superintendents. Politically this may be a hard one to sell. I think however it is extremely important or else you can expect rather severe competition to develop between a regional program and a residential facility. One will feel like the other is stealing students from them. If this can all be viewed in a continuum of services and all a part of the same package that is well coordinated it is certainly better for the students and I would think it would be better for the various state agencies involved. Your state residential facility should be seen in many respects as a last resort. If it is really easy for regional programs or LEAs to wash their hands of a

kid and dump them back at the residential center then you can fully expect that is what is going to happen on a difficult case. You want to be sure to avoid this easy dumping. If the whole program authority is centralized and coordinated then I think you can get away from moving students from site to site without being accountable.

10. The state should investigate appropriate measures for the vocational training of the visually handicapped.

While I agree with this concept there is probably a lot of other training that needs to occur as well as vocational training. However, it is a golden opportunity to force the interaction between the various vocational training organizations that typically pick these kids up when they graduate from high school and the high school programs. Facilitating this easy transition from school to work is a difficult task. Historically these groups never have cooperated and it is probably unfair to think they will now. One of my recommendations would be to beef up the vocational training programs that exist in the high schools already and to include these students right in with the rest of the vocational training programs. Another alternative would be to hold particular short-term intensive training in the area of vocational activities either during the regular school year or extended time during the summer focusing on a particular set of skills. In our state the community colleges are a resource for some of these activities.

In summary I would like to point out some things that I still think are extremely important. You will be accused of closing the School for the Blind. You will have very emotional parents who will point out to you that they have tried their very level best to get their children educated in the local schools and that it has never worked and it never will. What you have to point out is that you are now putting teeth in this and you will provide them with an appropriate education at their neighborhood schools. You must also be careful in pointing out that other states have been successful in doing this and other parents have been able to keep their child at home and get them educated appropriately while at the same time not accusing these parents of loving their children any less. There is always a great deal of guilt associated with any parent who has had to send their child away. You must tread on this very carefully. Try to convince them that you are offering them equal human rights and in fact a better educational program that will prepare these students to live in the natural environment exactly as their nonhandicapped peers do.

Good luck on your venture. I think you are moving along the exact correct steps and I hope you can get the state bureaucracies to listen to you. If I can be of any further assistance to you please contact me as I am vitally interested about this extremely important issue.

DBB5

August 22, 1986

Mr. Jacques Bagur
GSRI
Post Office Box 14787
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70898

Dear Jacques:

I am very interested in the status of the project regarding services to the visually impaired of Louisiana. The purpose of this letter is to briefly comment on the 10 Provisional Recommendations GSRI provided to the Project Review Committee on August 1st. I apologize for not getting this to you sooner.

1. "State educational policy for the visually impaired should be directed toward educational equity."
"Appropriate educational services" implies the intent better than "educational equity". I agree that "most appropriate" and "model services" are really unlimited concepts and therefore do not provide a rational basis. To have equal opportunities, it must be understood that the visually impaired need special services which some may view as special advantages rather than equity.

2. "The State should aggressively pursue the provision of appropriate educational services for the visually impaired through the LEAs."
In response to this and several other recommendations, all service providers need clear delineations of their roles in serving the visually impaired. For appropriate services to be provided by the LEA's, specially trained teachers and appropriate materials must be available. This recommendation should be combined with #3.

3. "The State should establish a regional delivery system for educational services to the visually impaired."
A regional service delivery system seems the most appropriate direction for Louisiana. With the limited number of teachers available, several of them could service areas of the state from regional sites located in established local systems and/or at the sites of the Louisiana Learning Resource Systems. Resources needed can be categorized into 3 areas: human resources, materials, and in-service opportunities.

4. "The State should increase the level of in-service training."
With no teacher training program for educators of the visually impaired in the state, a planned program of extensive in-service training is essential. This effort

could be coordinated by LSVI, with the in-service provided by professionals from Louisiana as well as other states.

In-service could be provided in a variety of formats including "Weekends with the Experts" where programs are provided during weekends. The weekends can be in different months and course credit can be received by participants. LSVI can host in-services and offset participants' expenses by possibly providing housing and reduced costs for meals. LLRS could also assist in coordinating and delivering the inservices.

5. "The State should provide stipends for teachers and students to attend approved out-of-state programs to work toward certification or a degree in the area of visual impairment."

Absolutely!

6. "LSVI's full-term residential program should be phased out."

The intent of this recommendation and the definition of "full-term" need to be clarified. This recommendation should be combined with #7. With the annual IEP reviews required by current federal law, decisions on students' placements can not be made for more than a year at a time.

7. "LSVI should be developed into a resource center with short-term residential programs."

LSVI should be the hub of the regional delivery system with the superintendent having the resposibilty of coordinating the statewide system. With an "open door" policy, LSVI can serve a student for as short or long a period as is necessary. The 24-hour curriculum focusing on daily living skills, as well as an academic program delivered by certified educators of the visually impaired, make LSVI a unique service provider in Louisiana.

8. "A new LSVI facility should not be built at this time."

The decision of whether or not to build a new facility for LSVI should await the determination of the state's direction and implementation plan for the provision of educational services for visually impaired students.

9. "Authority for service provision needs to be centralized."

The terms "authority" and "centralized" need to be clarified. The provision of services needs to be <u>coordinated</u>. This can be acoomplished only when the roles of the individual service providers have been clearly defined. The LEA is responsible for seeing that appropriate services are provided to each visually impaired student. In the array of service providers available, LSVI is one option for those students who are eligible for its services.

10. "The State should investigate appropriate measures for the vocational training of the visually handicapped."

Louisiana, as well as all states, should look closely at the vocational training of the visually impaired. Follow-up studies on placements in areas trained, unemployment rate, and current and potential areas of employability need to be conducted.

The Division of Blind Services should have the major responsibility for "job-ready" vocational training. The public school and LSVI programs should provide pre-vocational training, focusing on exploratory coursework, job attitudes, and general job skills (completing applications, interviewing, reporting on time, etc.).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Tuck

Tuck Tinsley III

Journal of
EDUCATION FINANCE

Box U-502 Western Ky. University
Bowling Green, KY 42101 (502) 745-6109

Executive Editor
Kern Alexander

Editor
Patricia Anthony

Associate Editor
Bettye MacPhail-Wilcox

Managing Editor
Richard Salmon

Finance Law Editors
M. David Alexander
William Camp
Martha McCarthy

Legislative Editors
William Sparkman
David S. Honeyman
Julie Underwood O'Hara

Book Review Editors
Craig Richards
Deborah Verstegen
James Ward

Sponsoring Institutions
American Education Finance Association
Indiana University
Texas Tech University
University of Minnesota
Virginia Polytechnic Institute
Western Kentucky University

August 8, 1986

Jacques Bagur
Project Director
Gulf South Research Institute
P.O. Box 14787
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70898

Dear Jacques:

Enclosed you will find a list of my expenses for the recent trip to Baton Rouge. If you need any receipts, I can send you my airlines ticket and automobile parking receipt, but did not remember to collect receipts at breakfast.

In regard to the meeting itself - I thoroughly enjoyed myself! I realize that was not the objective of the meeting, however, it was one of the side effects for me, and from the others' comments, for them, also. It seemed to me that all participants brought to the meeting different skills and varying viewpoints, concerning blind education. I felt that the suggestions given by review panel members, relating to the ten recommendations you and your staff had developed, have assisted in making those recommendations more definitive and "fleshed out."

It was also apparent to me that your staff had clearly done its homework, so that our task was able to be accomplished more quickly. You and your staff were terrific - both to work with and when dining! I found the entire group interesting as well as delightful.

The only area in which I would advise the gathering of more data is the area of finance - in relation to the feasibility of establishing regional centers, with the understanding that local school districts will share in the costs, etc. Also, I do believe that another look must be taken at your statutes governing special education, the blind school, and such. Other than that, I think that everything else has been taken care of.

Thanks again, Jacques, for including me in this group. I hope that all goes smoothly from this point on. And on a personal note, thank you for taking me back to the bay.

Sincerely,
Pat (PATRICIA ANTHONY)

341 Erickson Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824
August 9, 1986

Project Director, Statewide Programmatic Study of
Educational Needs of Blind and Visually Impaired in Louisiana
GULF SOUTH RESEARCH INSTITUTE
P.O. Box 14787
Baton Rouge, LA 70898

Dear Jacque,

I have had time now to reflect on your presentation of the results of your programmatic study and panel discussions related to your provisional recommendations designed to meet the educational needs of visually impaired and blind students in Lousiana, regardless of home locale. I thought that the meeting of August 1 went well, for your preparation for the panel meeting was thorough. It was helpful to be able to focus discussion on your ten preliminary recommendations, as these ten recommendations provided the needed parametery for questions, concerns, philosophy and issues. I personally felt that each panel member present had ample opportunity to question, offer opinions and make recommendations to you and your staff who were present. I feel satisfied that our deliberations and your ten preliminary recommendations accurately reflect my personal philosophy and opinions on the education of visually impaired and blind students in the United States.

First, I congratulate you and your staff on thoroughness in exploration of the literature, familiarity with and interpretation of federal and state laws as they relate to the education of handicapped learners in general, clear understanding of the goals and objectives in the education of visually impaired and blind students in particular, sensitivity to societal intention and preferences of young parents today for the education of their visually impaired children, sensitivity to the historical tradition of segregating blind and visually impaired children for education, and

recognition that for educable to gifted there are no educational needs of visually impaired students that cannot be met in local or regional settings - - when a carefully conceived curriculum, well trained staff and appropriate resources are planned - - and provided. (This is not to say that some of the curriculum should not be designated for instruction centrally at a residential site.)

I support your ten provisional recommendations when you include the suggestions of panel members. I recall that we recommended that the ten recommendations be ordered in a progressive sequence. Perhaps a time line can also be offered to reduce potential alarm that LSVI's full-term residential program will be phased out before LEAs and Regional Centers have established reasonable delivery systems.

I support your recommendation of central administration of a state-wide comprehensive delivery system, with the provision that LSVI and the Regional Centers be co-equal in authority, with LEA, Regional Center and LSVI directors reporting directly to the state director of special education services. In an efficient comprehensive delivery, it is essential that collaborative planning be ensured; Regional Center and LEA directors and teachers of the visually impaired and blind must be able to request needed specific instruction (adapted curriculum) at a central residential site on a continual or rotating basis - - and be assured their requests will be honored in a timely manner, as needed by their students. Local and regional teachers and directors need to study their local and regional resources and utilize a central residential setting only when it is educationally, socially and fiscally defensible. Moreover, in some instances it may be in students' better interests for central site staff to provide instruction/consultation or in-service education of local or regional regular teachers (i.e., home economics), teachers of visually impaired, regular supervisor or administrator, or parents, at a local or regional school or home. I believe that the residential school staff should be at the service of the

LEAs and Regional Centers, and not an independent entity planning and offering curriculum in isolation of documented requests for specific local and regional students. Moreover, I believe that it will be a great error to place the Regional Centers under the administration of LSVI. First, the majority of the state's visually impaired and blind learners should at any given time be enrolled in public school programs within regional or local centers; second, local and regional center staff best know the needs of their students and the extent of their local and regional human and other resources; and third, local and regional staffs and parents are required to plan for the long-term education of their students. Requests by local and regional staffs and parents for instruction at a central residential site should be for meeting students' periodic, short-term objectives. These objectives will vary from year to year depending upon the ages and the needs of local and regional students. The state director of special education services, with advice from his/her consultant for visually impaired, is in the most neutral position to oversee comprehensive planning and program development - - and to abort centralized plans which could or should be offered locally or regionally, or are for any reason inappropriate offerings at a central site. At the same time, when LSVI is on an equal basis with LEAs and Regional Centers, it will have equal input into cooperative planning and comprehensive services are more likely to be assured in a fiscally efficient manner. Moreover, if regional and local centers don't require residential site services - - or unforseen problems arise in the future which require longer term and more intensive services for students at a residential site - - shifts may be accommodated swiftly, based on current documented needs. Dollar savings from reductions in residential services should be used to purchase equipment and improve instruction in technology, as one example of an incentive for shifting funds from residential care to direct education services.

I agree that a new LSVI facility should not be built at this time. In a new, comprehensive service delivery plan, it is unknown what type of facility should be built, or it's appropriate location within the state. Until Regional Centers are

established and the needs of students and staffs surveyed and documented, it is unclear how many students will or should be in residence at any given time - - or for what objectives.

I need to highlight for support your provisional recommendation 10 relating to the need for vocational training of visually impaired and blind students. I would like to suggest that vocational training become part of a larger goal of comprehensive transition services. The transition from school to work requires long-range planning and dictates the content of the essential, additional curriculum which is taught or directed by specialist teachers of visually impaired and blind students and their parents from birth through the school years. It requires cooperation with parents, rehabilitation counselors and regular teachers, and must include regular and special career education content, prevocational training, work-study experiences, development of all independent living skills, and vocational training for all blind and visually impaired students including those who are going on to higher education and professional careers. The importance of a variety of work experiences to the development of non-handicapped and handicapped youngsters is widely accepted as a necessity. To prepare students for a successful transition, it will be important for LEAs, Regional Centers and the Louisiana State Department of Education to provide teachers of the visually impaired, parents and supervisors at LEA, Regional Centers and LSVI with a comprehensive documentation of the essential, additional curriculum and skill assessments for all visually impaired and blind students in Louisiana. Such a document will supplement and not duplicate the regular curriculum, since the regular curriculum is the basic curriculum to be completed by non-impaired as well as visually impaired and blind students.

Your recommendation 4 relative to teacher preparation and in-service training is a critical link in the comprehensive delivery chain. Well prepared and continually updated personnel are essential to an equitable education. There are three

elements in this education: 1) initial preparation of teachers of visually impaired for certification purposes, 2) continuing in-service education of the above teachers following certification, and 3) in-service of regular educators, teacher aides, parents, administrators and others. I believe that it is a matter of great urgency that an agreement is developed with a university to offer credit and oversee courses that will lead to state certification in visually impaired and blind education. A balanced teacher preparation program is essential. A respected consultant from an established teacher preparation program could be most useful, and perhaps could be retained on a continuing basis as required. Three or four persons who are experienced and trained in this education should be recruited to teach the required courses, and oversee practica. Instructors affiliated with current 9-month university teacher preparation programs could be recruited for summer instruction. In the interest of continuity, a firm commitment of several years should be required. It may be possible during the school year (or summer) to rotate the instruction among Regional Center sites to reduce travel requirements of participants. Plans for the continual upgrading of knowledge of current teachers of visually impaired - - and future regular teachers in LEAs and Regional Centers who will receive visually impaired students in their regular classrooms - can be implemented by certified teachers of the visually impaired, the state vision consultant, and invited guest instructors who are specialists in a skill area, such as low vision, orientation and mobility, computer adaptations, or others. And finally, to develop a strong state-wide delivery, regular and special education supervisors and administrators and parents will need educating, as few have any notion at all about the education of visually impaired learners, hardly surprising in light of the fact that few, if any, have ever before had contact with a visually impaired person.

Your recommendation of a regional delivery system, as we have in Michigan, makes a lot of sense as you develop a comprehensive state-wide delivery. Since

visually impaired and blind students are few in number and often scattered thinly over a wide geographic area except in large city systems, regionalization is a necessary. In addition, I will reiterate my recommendation that one center, perhaps LSVI, operate a central media service for visually impaired and blind students. Staff at the media center could more efficiently receive all local and regional teacher requests for texts in braille, large type or sound recording; conduct a search for availability; and when unavailable, locate appropriate braillists, utilize a central production center to produce books in large type, braillon or tape, and provide other related services. The media service in Michigan operates centrally in this manner, and I can recommend it is an appropriate model for your consideration. Incidentally, it does not duplicate services offered by Regional Instructional Materials Centers for the Handicapped.

Please forgive the absence of letterhead and my amateur typing. I have prepared and typed my report at my summer residence, some 225 miles north and west of my university office. At this writing, I expect to return to East Lansing at the end of September. If you need to talk with me before then, please send a note to me at my current summer address (P.O. Box 91, Northport, MI 49670) until August 25; then to my home (P.O. Box 1562, E. Lansing, MI 48823). After August 25, you may also notify my office that you need me to telephone you, as I will be in touch with my secretary from time to time after that date. Once I am back in East Lansing, I will be happy to share my materials relating to teacher preparation, including our teacher preparation program, course outlines, required teacher competencies, and any other materials you might find helpful.

Thank you for the privilege of becoming acquainted with, and providing possible input into, the education of visually impaired and blind students of Louisiana. The professor who most influenced me in a career in special education was an L.S.U. graduate and member of an old Baton Rouge family. It was through her and her family that I first came to know something of Louisiana, long before my first

visit to the state. Because of her, and her family, I have always had a special interest in Louisiana.

And finally, thank you for your warm hospitality and thoughtfulness during my stay. I enjoyed the discussions with your staff and panel members, and the dinner and conversation together on Friday evening was a lovely culmination of an exciting day. I hope that you will convey to Jim, Kay and the other members of your staff my gratitude for their competent preparations and clear presentations. All of you made the work of our panel significantly more effective.

Enclosed is a summary of my expenses.

Sincerely,

Lou Alonso, Professor, CEPSE, and
Coordinator, Programs Preparing Personnel
for the Education of Visually Impaired
and Blind/Deaf Learners

Enclosures

la

439 Ash NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106
August 11, 1986

Mr. Jacques Bagur
Gulf South Research Institute
P.O. Box 14787
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70898

Dear Mr. Bagur:

During our meeting of August 1, 1986 we discussed the ten provisional recommendations concerning provision of educational services to blind children in Louisiana. During the meeting many valuable comments were made concerning these recommendations as well as the status of educational services for blind children nationwide. I am writing to expand upon my views concerning the provisional recommendations in hopes that they will be helpful as you proceed with your research.

It seems clear that there is no "state of the art" model for educating blind children which can be widely agreed upon by educators throughout the country. This is due to a number of factors, most of them ideological. There seem to be two primary schools of thought which guide the form and substance of educational service models. One is that blind children are in need of an education and require only the adaptive skills and self-confidence to be fully competitive. The other view differs significantly yet in subtle ways. Commonly throughout the country educators believe that blind children require extensive supplement to the regular curriculum to obtain a well-rounded education. The view is that blind children miss out on many valuable life experiences by virtue of blindness and therefore require extensive training to help compensate for these deficiencies. I regard the first view as progressive and the latter as reflecting societal stereotypes. The difficulty in identifying what attitude is driving an educational model is rooted in human nature. Most people do not wish to regard themselves as regressive and therefore look for ways of justifying prejudice. Perhaps I seem to be speaking harshly, however the problem is a serious one. The quality of education a child receives is not all that hangs in the balance. The training and attitudes children develop will carry over into the quality of their lives long past the school years.

It is not easy to assess attitude through words. Both progressive and regressive programs use the same language. If for example we take the area of orientation and mobility, both the progressive and the nonprogressive would say that their objective is independence. In the area of braille reading, both

the progressive and the nonprogressive would state that their goal is literacy. The telling difference has to do with expectations. In many programs (in fact, in most programs) around the country elementary school-aged blind children are given no training in cane travel. Later when cane travel is introduced it is of a type that stresses extensive drill along predetermined routes. In other words, the expectation that the child will become "independent" is in reality an expectation that the child will acquire skills not on a par with the sighted but rather a level of functioning considered optimal by the child's instructor. In other words, the expectation drives the training model. In other programs (not very many) around the country where the expectation is that blind children need the skills to function competitively with their sighted peers cane travel is introduced at kindergarten. Beyond that, children are expected to find their way independently throughout the school and on the playground. They function independently in the cafeteria, carrying their own trays and finding their own seats. They bus their own trays when they are through and in short decide where they want to go and when and participate fully in all aspects of school life. If the expectation is full participation then the natural outcome is a program which provides children the tools for full participation.

The idea of expectations driving the curriculum can also be seen in the area of braille reading. Three years ago the Professional Standards Committee of the Division for Visually Handicapped of the Council for Exceptional Children published a set of proposed standards to help teachers decide whether a child should use braille or print as their primary reading medium. The proposed standard stated that if a child could read print at a rate of ten words per minute or faster, then print was the preferred medium. This standard has less to do with educational theory than with attitudes about blindness. If it is believed that the blind can be fully participating, contributing members of society, then how can it be seriously proposed that a child should be instructed in a method which allows a reading speed of as little as ten words per minute? Braille readers regularly achieve speeds of 150-250 words per minute. This reading speed is comparable to the reading speed of sighted children. What then would lead the educational establishment to recommend equipping children with an inferior reading method to braille? There is only one conceivable answer. The educational establishment does not honestly believe that the blind can be competitive and regards children as "better off" or "more normal" if they function like the sighted, e.g. by reading print.

I have gone on at some length to make clear why I feel the issue of educational service delivery cannot be viewed as simply methodological. If a program springs out of negative attitudes toward blindness than nothing is gained by decentralizing services from a residential setting and placing them with the LEA. Similarly, a program underpinned by a positive attitude toward

blindness can have an excellent and long lasting impact on blind children irrespective of the educational setting. Therefore, the real issue as I see it is primarily ideological and only secondarily methodological. When looking at service delivery models it is necessary to face the specific question of centralized versus decentralized programming. Given the small number of blind children it is not likely that a state can hope to maintain "the best of both worlds" with local and residential services as available options. For this reason, it is necessary to choose where the emphasis will be in service delivery. Decentralized programming through LEAs or regional cooperatives seems most consistent with the law and desirable by groups of parents. This is provided (and it is a big proviso) that children can truly expect that their educational needs will be met in their home community. Decentralized programming carries with it the responsibility that LEAs not simply be mandated to hire trained personnel to provide appropriate services, but that the state aggressively pursue the training of teachers to ensure reasonable availability of qualified personnel. Provisional recommendation five addresses the issue of teacher training, however it is my belief that Louisiana would be better served by bringing the training to teachers rather than sending teachers for training out-of-state.

As I review the ten provisional recommendations, I find that I am in agreement with the overall direction they indicate. In addition to the aforementioned suggested change in recommendation five, I would also propose a change in wording (not concept) of recommendation six. I am in agreement that LSVI should cease to be a K-12 option for blind children. As services move to the LEAs it is inconceivable that LSVI would sustain a sufficient population to provide the broad range of social and educational services for a child's entire educational experience. It seems feasible that LSVI could serve as a short-term facility providing concentrated training in particular skill areas, thereby working cooperatively to supplement the LEA's program. I believe item six as it is currently written implies the closing of LSVI rather than restructuring its function.

The ten provisional recommendations lead naturally into one another and reflect not only needed change but the sequence in which change should take place. I believe they should be reported as a sequential list of recommendations with only one change in their order. I believe recommendation nine should follow recommendation one. In this way it is emphasized that the development of new program options must be centrally coordinated if they are to achieve the goal of equity for blind children within an LEA and parity among programs throughout the state.

I look forward to the completion of the project as I believe Louisiana has a real opportunity to establish a well-coordinated educational system for blind children throughout the state.

Sincerely yours,

Fred Schroeder

Fred Schroeder

Appendix B
STATISTICAL PROFILE

Population

The population of visually impaired individuals in Louisiana from birth through age 21 is estimated to be 3,330 as of 1985. This estimate was derived by assuming that one out of every 500 children has vision sufficiently impaired as to adversely affect his or her functioning in school (see Eileen Scott's Your Visually Impaired Student). In 1985 the population aged 0-21 in Louisiana was estimated at 1,664,890.

Literature further suggests that there are two to three times more partially sighted than legally blind individuals. Therefore, it may be expected that two-thirds to three-fourths of the visually impaired population (2,200-2,498) is partially sighted as opposed to legally blind. Based on Louisiana Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR), Division of Blind Services (DBS) data, 1,076 individuals through age 21 in the State have been identified as legally blind. This number closely approximates one-third of the estimated visually impaired population. The data produced by DBS does not include legally blind individuals residing in DHHR schools or hospitals.

Age

Three sources of data were used for the purpose of making statements or determinations regarding age of the visually impaired population. The list of legally blind persons receiving services from DBS, Child Count, and a compilation of data from the Office of Special Educational Service (OSE) all give age or birth date information. However, the limitations of each must be mentioned.

The DBS data is only on legally blind persons. Therefore, those considered partially sighted (as much as two-thirds of the State's visually impaired population) will not appear.

Child Count figures are relatively low, as students are reported according to their primary handicapping condition. Also, this data includes only those aged 3-21. Many more students, categorized under another handicapping condition, receive visually impaired related

services than is suggested by Child Count information. Additionally, students at LSVI do not appear on this particular data set, which is gathered from public and private school systems in the LEAs for funding purposes. Child Count reports 369 visually impaired students. The largest number in a single age is 33 fourteen-year-olds. Because of the relatively small number, no inferences can be made.

Data compiled by the OSE from the Gallaudet Survey, Lanser reports, Annual School Report, and LLRS is used only as an indicator for various kinds of information due to discrepancies in reporting among the sources. Also, this set includes individuals residing in DHHR schools, which are exempt from DBS services and are not served through the LEAs.

The DBS reveals a rather steady increase in the number of legally blind persons as the age increases. No explanation can be offered for the increase, as the vast majority have reportedly been visually impaired since birth or infancy.

The compilation of data collected by OSE indicates a marked increase of seven-year-olds over six year-olds being served. From age 7-15, the number of children reportedly served varies little from one age to another. The largest number of persons identified by age is 16. This source of data indicates a dramatic decline in numbers of students past age 16. This decline may be due to the absence of mandatory school attendance past the age of 16.

Age at Onset

The DBS was able to present information regarding age at onset of visual impairment for 975 of its clients aged 0-21. Ninety percent of these individuals were blind before the age of three, and most have been blind from birth. Three-fourths of LSVI's 1985-86 enrollment has been visually impaired since birth or infancy. Literature and personal communication with national organizations for the visually impaired suggest an increase in the number of visually impaired infants because of advances by the medical field in life saving procedures.

Sex

The incidence of visual impairment is greater among males than females. This is not a phenomenon peculiar to Louisiana, but rather a

prevailing characteristic. Based on DBS data, there is a 60/40 ratio of legally blind males to females. LSVI's enrollment for school year 1985-86 reveals that 59 percent of the pupils were male and 41 percent were female.

Race

Based on available data, there is a higher incidence of visual impairment among whites than blacks. Fifty-one percent of DBS's clients are white. Fifty-five percent of LSVI's enrollment for 1985-86 are white. No usable data was available on incidence in non-whites other than black. Literature suggests a slightly higher incidence in whites, but no explanations for this occurrence were presented. However, it should be noted that there are a greater number of whites than non-whites in Louisiana and nationally.

School Districts

All 64 parish school systems and both city school systems have identified students with visual impairments. Thirteen of the 66 systems report no children with a primary handicapping condition of visual impairment. Of these 13 school systems, nine have children enrolled in LSVI. Of the four remaining systems, all have children reported on the State Registry with LLRS (Table B-1). None of the counts mentioned reflect the number of children categorized as multi-handicapped or other handicapping condition who may require or be receiving visually impaired related services. Districts serving the greatest number of visually impaired children are those containing metropolitan areas where populations are highest. Conversely, those districts with the fewest number of visually impaired children are more rural in nature and much less densely populated.

Two parishes, East Baton Rouge and Orleans, report over 50 children whose primary handicapping condition is visual impairment. Three additional parishes report over 20 visually impaired students.

A compilation of data gathered by OSE from the Gallaudet Survey, Lanser, Annual School Report, and LLRS reveals that every LEA in the State has a student with some degree of visual impairment. This same data source indicates that 25 parishes have children with visual impairments at DHHR schools or hospitals. Forty-four parishes have

Table B-1. Distribution of Visually Impaired Population, Age Zero-21

Region	DBS[1]	Child Count[2]	LLRS[3]	LSVI[4]
Region 1				
Jefferson	69	26	48	9
Orleans	95	56	57	2
Plaquemines	13	3	1	-0-
St. Bernard	11	2	8	1
St. Tammany	20	7	12	6
Total	208	94	126	18
Region 2				
Ascension	10	4	4	1
East Baton Rouge	104	56	37	13
East Feliciana	6	1	2	-0-
Iberville	5	-0-	2	4
Livingston	18	4	5	8
Pointe Coupee	9	-0-	1	1
St. Helena	1	-0-	-0-	1
Tangipahoa	29	6[5]	4	7
Washington	15	12[5]	11	2
West Baton Rouge	12	-0-	-0-	6
West Feliciana	3	-0-	-0-	1
Total	212	83	66	44
Region 3				
Assumption	8	2	1	1
Lafourche	20	5	7	2
St. Charles	10	4	2	-0-
St. James	6	-0-	-0-	2
St. John	7	1	-0-	1
Terrebonne	26	12	13	4
Total	77	24	23	10
Region 4				
Acadia	22	5	9	4
Evangeline	17	1	5	3
Iberia	25	10	12	2
Lafayette	45	28	28	1
St. Landry	22	7	14	-0-
St. Martin	10	-0-	4	4
St. Mary	19	4	5	2
Vermilion	16	2	10	1
Total	176	57	87	17
Region 5				
Allen	4	3	2	1
Beauregard	11	3	10	2
Calcasieu	30	12	29	-0-
Cameron	1	-0-	1	-0-
Jefferson Davis	15	8	12	2
Vernon	22	1	2	2
Total	83	27	56	7

Table B-1 (Cont'd). Distribution of Visually Impaired Population, Age Zero-21

Region	DBS[1]	Child Count[2]	LLRS[3]	LSVI[4]
Region 6				
Avoyelles	10	-0-	3	4
Catahoula	9	1	3	-0-
Concordia	6	2	4	-0-
Grant	5	1	1	-0-
LaSalle	6	-0-	1	4
Rapides	41	15	13	-0-
Winn	4	5	4	1
Total	81	24	29	9
Region 7				
Bienville	5	1	2	-0-
Bossier	19	6	13	2
Caddo	66	24	27	1
DeSoto	6	-0-	1	-0-
Jackson	5	5	6	-0-
Lincoln	4	-0-	1	-0-
Natchitoches	24	16	18	-0-
Red River	6	2	-0-	-0-
Sabine	6	3	3	1
Webster	14	4	2	3
Total	155	61	73	7
Region 8				
Caldwell	3	1	-0-	1
Claiborne	8	3	3	-0-
East Carroll	8	6	7	1
Franklin	8	4	6	-0-
Madison	2	1	-0-	1
Morehouse	5	2[5]	4	-0-
Ouachita	29	14[6]	17	4
Richland	5	2	-0-	-0-
Tensas	-0-	-0-	1	-0-
Union	10	2	3	-0-
West Carroll	6	1	5	-0-
Total	84	36	46	7
STATEWIDE TOTAL	1,076	406	506	119

[1]Division of Blind Services, June 1986.

[2]Includes 94-142 and 89-313 counts for visually handicapped and deaf-blind, 1985.

[3]Louisiana Learning Resources System, includes legally blind and partially sighted, June 1986.

[4]1985-86 school year, commuters and residents.

[5]Includes two visually handicapped and one deaf-blind from city of Bogalusa.

[6]Includes 10 visually handicapped from city of Monroe.

Source: Gulf South Research Institute.

visually impaired children at LSVI or the Louisiana School for the Deaf.

Visual Acuity

No substantive statements can be made regarding visual acuity of the visually impaired in Louisiana based on readily available data. Such a task would involve a case-by-case examination of confidential information in each of the 66 LEAs. Cumulative data sources such as DBS and LLRS use different criteria in determining eligibility for services, and the service population differs somewhat due to the nature of services offered.

Gallaudet Research Institute conducted a survey of visually impaired individuals in State and local facilities for the school year 1984-85. The data presented on visual acuity is for distance vision only. The information is shown on a matrix table that allows the reader to determine distance sight per right or left eye, not per individual.

Data from DBS is restricted to those determined to be legally blind. Therefore, approximately two-thirds of the estimated visually impaired population in the State is not represented. LLRS data is restricted to only those individuals meeting State eligibility requirements and receiving services. Of the 506 persons registered with LLRS from LEAs, 70 percent are legally blind.

Reading and Writing Speed and Medium

No data is available on writing performance. However, information gathered from LSVI and OSE regarding reading medium may be an indicator as to the percentage of visually impaired students able to use paper and pen versus slate and stylus. Reading speed could only be obtained through personal interviews with teachers, and this method would not produce quantifiable information.

According to a 1985-86 LSVI roster, two of 119 students were non-readers. Of the 117 remaining students, five could use braille or print for reading. The largest number of students (54 percent) read from print. No distinction was made as to whether the print being used was large print or regular print. The remaining 49 (42 percent) students are braille readers.

OSE's compilation of data includes 636 readers. The reading medium used by 83 percent (530) of those reported is large print. Ten individuals were reported to read regular print. Ninety-five (15 percent) students use braille, and one student uses both braille and large print. All individuals reported by DHHR schools are reported as non-readers.

Appendix C
SURVEYS

Limitations on secondary data and a paucity of literature reporting studies germane to the questions at hand required the collection of first-hand information. Four separate populations were sampled and interviewed: parents of LSVI students enrolled in the 1985-86 school year; parents of local public school students enrolled in the 1984-85 school year; graduates of LSVI from 1978 to 1983; and graduates of local public schools who were born between 1958 and 1966.

Population listings were obtained in various ways. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of parents of LSVI students were provided by LSVI. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of LSVI graduates were also provided by the school. A systematic sample of public school students was selected from the personal demographic profiles gathered by the Gallaudet College Research Division under contract to the State Department of Education. Telephone numbers were obtained from information. Parents of this group were interviewed. Graduates/leavers from public school were identified by taking all of the personal demographic profiles for students with birth dates prior to 1966 from the 1981-82 year reports by Gallaudet. Additionally, a systematic sample from the records of the Division of Blind Services for persons with birth dates between 1958 and 1966 was selected. Telephone numbers were obtained from information.

Three questionnaires were developed: one for parents of current LSVI students, one for parents of current public school students and one for graduates of LSVI and public schools. Questions were kept identical where possible to reduce error and to draw comparisons.

LSVI PARENTS SURVEY

Hello, my name is _____ with Gulf South Research Institute in Baton Rouge. Are you _____ the parent or guardian of _____?
(student name)

Mr./Ms. _____, GSRI is under contract to the State of Louisiana to conduct a study of the educational needs of the blind and visually impaired in Louisiana. We need information from parents or guardians of these students to help insure the success of the study. I'd like to assure you that we are required by law to keep any information you give us confidential.

1. How old is _____? Record age _____

2. How long has _____ been a student at LSVI?

_____

3. Is he/she a resident student or a day school student at LSVI?

_____ Resident
_____ Day school
_____ Both Explain: _____

_____

4. Is _____ in a graded or ungraded program?

_____ Graded _____ Ungraded

5. What grade is he/she in? Enter grade _____

6. Has _____ ever gone to school other than at LSVI?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, where and when: _____

_____

_____

7a. What are the reasons for placing _____ at LSVI? (Note to interviewer: Some of the possible reasons are: (a) services are not available through the local school district; (b) to allow student to engage in sports; (c) family/home problems (d) multiple handicaps) Probe

_____

_____

_____

_____

7b. (Ask only if services are not available locally)

Would you have kept _____ at home if the local school system had appropriate services or programs?

_____ Yes _____ No

Explain: _____

_____

_____

8. Does _____ have any other handicaps in addition to vision?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, list: _____

_____

_____

9. What kind of services or special equipment does _____ require?

For visual impairment: _____

_____

For other handicaps: _____

_____

10a. What services or programs does _____ need that are <u>not</u> offered by your local school system?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10b. What do your think are the reasons that these programs or services are <u>not</u> offered by your local school system?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. How satisfied are you with the present program at LSVI? (Read responses--probe for explanation--what is the reason for their answer)

_____ Very Satisfied

_____ Satisfied

_____ Dissatisfied

_____ Very Dissatisfied

Reasons: _____

_____

_____

12. Ask if applicable: How satisfied were you with the public school program that _____ attended? (Probe for explanation--what is the reason for their answer?)

_____ Very Satisfied

_____ Satisfied

_____ Dissatisfied

_____ Very Dissatisfied

Reasons: _____

_____

_____

13. Ask if applicable

How would you compare the program at LSVI and other educational programs _____ has been enrolled in? (Probe advantages/ disadvantages)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. What changes would you like to see made in the programs or services offered to blind and visually impaired students or what new programs or services should be offered?

At LSVI: _____

_____

_____

_____

At public school or other program: _____

_____

_____

_____

15. What are your expectations for _____'s future in the areas of living arrangements, work, and education.

A. Do you feel that he/she will be able to:

1. _____ live independently (on their own)
2. _____ live in a group home; or
3. _____ will he/she need to be in an institution

Any Comments: _____

_____

_____

B. In the area of employment, do you feel he/she:

1. _____ will be capable of competitive employment
2. _____ will be capable of sheltered employment, or
3. _____ will not be capable of any employment

Any Comments: _____

_____

_____

C. In the area of education, do you feel he/she:

1. _____ is likely to go to college or other training after completing high school
2. _____ is likely to complete high school
3. _____ is not likely to complete high school
4. _____ other
   Explain: _____

_____

_____

Any Comments: _____

_____

_____

16. How much input or say-so do you feel you had about placing _____ in LSVI?

_____ a great deal

_____ a fair amount

_____ only a little

_____ almost none

Probe for explanation--example, "Could you tell me about it"

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

17. (For Area II residents only)
Did your family move to where you are now living in order to be close to LSVI?

_____ Yes _____ No

18. Are there any comments or observations you would like to make?

19. Do you feel that it is necessary to build a new school for the visually impaired?

_____ Yes _____ No

Explain: _____

PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENTS SURVEY

ID___ ___ ___

Parish___ ___

Hello, my name is _____ with Gulf South Research Institute in Baton Rouge. Are you _____ the parent or guardian of _____?
(student name)

Mr./Ms. _____, GSRI is under contract to the State of Louisiana to conduct a study of the educational needs of the blind and visually impaired in Louisiana. We need information from parents or guardians of these students to help insure the success of the study. I'd like to assure you that we are required by law to keep any information you give us confidential.

Circle one: Is student (male/female) (white, black, or other)

1. How old is (he/she) now? _____ (Years)

2. What is the extent of (his/her) visual impairment?

   Is he/she:
   1 Totally blind
   2 Have light perception
   3 Legally blind, 20/200 or less
   4 Less than 20/70 but not legally blind
   5 20/70
   6 Other _____

3. What was (his/her) age at the on set of visual loss? _____ (Years)

4a. Does (he/she) have any other handicaps in addition to vision?
____ Yes ____ No

b. If yes, list: _____

_____

_____

5. What services or special equipment does (he/she) require?

For visual impairment:_____

_____

For other handicaps:_____

_____

I would now like to ask you some questions about _____ educational history.
(child's name)

6a. At what age did he/she first receive intervention or education services for the visually impaired? (Enter age) _____

b. Please describe the services you received. _____

_____

_____

_____

7. Starting with the first school (he/she) attended I would like you to tell me: (a) The name and location (parish) of each school you went to; (b) what age (he/she) was when (he/she) went there; (c) if the school was public or private, and; (d) the kind of program offered to (him/her).

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Probe until sufficient information is acquired so that the program can be placed into one of the following categories:

1 Regular Class - Independent placement

2 Teacher Consultant - VI teacher consults with regular classroom teachers--has limited contact with students

3 Itinerant Support Services - VI teacher does same as (2) but also meets with student one to two times/week

4 Resource Room - Provides daily specialized instruction for less than half a day. Student is in regular classroom for remainder of the time.

5 Cooperative Class - Same as (4) except student is in special class for more than half a day.

6 Special Self Contained Class in a Regular School. Student spends all of his time in a special classroom. Non-academic integration only.

7 Day School Student at Louisiana (State) School for Visually (LSVI) Impaired.

8 Residential School Resident

9 Homebound Instruction

10 Instruction in Hospital/Institution

	7a. Name/Location (parish) of School	7b. Age Attended	7c. Public/Private	7d. Program
1. N:	_____	_____	_____	_____
L:	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. N:	_____	_____	_____	_____
L:	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. N:	_____	_____	_____	_____
L:	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. N:	_____	_____	_____	_____
L:	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. N:	_____	_____	_____	_____
L:	_____	_____	_____	_____

8a. Do you feel that your child's placement in any of these schools was not appropriate? That is, it was not the best program for (him/her) at the time?
___ Yes ___ No

b. If yes: Which schools and why was the placement not appropriate?

_____

_____

_____

9. NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: If student moved from a local school to LSVI - ask, "Why did (he/she) leave the local school and go to LSVI?"

_____

_____

_____

10. If student moved from LSVI to a local school - ask, "Why did (he/she) leave LSVI and go to the local school?"

_____

_____

_____

11a. If attended LSVI ask: How satisifed are you with the program you were provided at LSVI? (Read responses--probe for explanation--what is the reason for their answer)

_____ Very Satisfied

_____ Satisfied

_____ Dissatisfied

_____ Very Dissatisfied

b. Reasons: _____

_____

_____

12a. If attended local schools ask: How satisfied are you with the local public school program that (he/she) attended? (Probe for explanation--what is the reason for their answer?)

_____ Very Satisfied

_____ Satisfied

_____ Dissatisfied

_____ Very Dissatisfied

b. Reasons: _____

_____

_____

13. If attended local school ask: Generally speaking, how was _____ (student's name) treated by:

a. The other children in the school _____

_____

b. The teachers and administrators _____

_____

14. What services or equipment does _____ (student's name) now receive to help (him/her) in school.

(Read list--mark all that apply)

___ a. Interpreter
___ b. Note-taker
___ c. Reader
___ d. Tutor or special aide
___ e. Braille
___ f. Large print
___ g. Recorded materials
___ h. Instruction in the use of aids
___ i. Low vision aids (list) _____
___ j. Other (specify) _____
___ k. None

15a. What services or programs does _____ need that are not offered by your local school system?

_____

_____

_____

_____

b. What do your think are the reasons that these programs or services are not offered by your local school system?

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. Concerning your rights and the rights of your child under state and federal law--would you say that you understand:

___ a. A great deal
___ b. A fair amount
___ c. Only a little
___ d. Almost nothing about it

17. Concerning the diagnostic or assessment information that tells you what is wrong with your child--would you say that you understand:

___ a. A great deal
___ b. A fair amount
___ c. Only a little
___ d. Almost nothing about it

18. Concerning your child's Individual Education Program--How much input or say-so do you feel that you have in regard to your child's IEP?

___ a. A great deal
___ b. A fair amount
___ c. Only a little
___ d. Almost none

19. How much knowledge would you say that you have of the services available to your child and your family?

___ a. A great deal
___ b. A fair amount
___ c. Only a little
___ d. Almost none

20a. What changes would you like to see made in the programs or services offered to blind and visually impaired students or what new programs or services should be offered?

At LSVI: _____

_____

_____

_____

b. At local public schools or other programs: _____

_____

_____

_____

21. What are your expectations for (child's name) future in the areas of living arrangements, work, and education.

a. Do you feel that he/she will be able to:

1. _____ live independently (on their own)
2. _____ live in a group home; or
3. _____ will he/she need to be in an institution

Any Comments: _____

_____

_____

b. In the area of employment, do you feel he/she:

1. _____ will be capable of competitive employment
2. _____ will be capable of sheltered employment, or
3. _____ will not be capable of any employment

Any Comments: _____

_____

_____

c. In the area of education, do you feel he/she:

1. _____ is likely to go to college or other training after completing high school
2. _____ is likely to complete high school
3. _____ is not likely to complete high school
4. _____ other (Explain): _____

_____

_____

22. Do you feel that a residential school for the blind and visually impaired is a necessary part of an adequate state educational system? ___ Yes ___ No

Why? _____

_____

_____

_____

23. Do you feel that it is necessary to build a new school for the visually impaired? ___ Yes ___ No

Why? _____

_____

_____

_____

24. Do you have any comments or observations you would like to make?

_____

_____

_____

GRADUATE/FORMER STUDENT SURVEY--LSVI AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Hello, my name is _____ with Gulf South Research Institute in Baton Rouge. I would like to speak with _____.
(Enter Name)

Mr./Mrs. _____, GSRI is under contract to the State of Louisiana to conduct a study of the educational needs of the blind and visually impaired in Louisiana. We need information from former students to help insure the success of the study. I'd like to assure you that we are required by law to keep any information you give us confidential.

Circle one: Is respondent (male/female) (white/black or other)

1. How old are you now? _____ (Years)

2. What is the extent of your visual impairment?

   Are you: 1 Totally blind
   2 Have light perception
   3 Legally blind, 20/200 or less
   4 Less than 20/70 but not legally blind
   5 20/70
   6 Other _____

3. What was your age at the onset of visual loss? _____ (Years)

4a. Do you have any other handicaps in addition to vision? ___ Yes ___ No

b. If yes, list: _____

_____

_____

I would now like to ask you some questions about your educational history.

5a. At what age did you first receive intervention or education services? (Enter age) _____

b. Please describe the services you received. _____

_____

_____

_____

6a. Starting with the first school you attended I would like you to tell me: (a) The name and location (parish) of each school you went to; (b) what age you were when you went there; (c) if the school was public or private, and; (d) the kind of program offered to you.

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Probe until sufficient information is acquired so that the program can be placed into one of the following categories:

1 Regular Class - Independent placement

2 Teacher Consultant - VI teacher consults with regular classroom teachers--has limited contact with students

3 Itinerant Support Services - VI teacher does same as (2) but also meets with student one to two times/week

4 Resource Room - Provides daily specialized instruction for less than half a day. Student is in regular classroom for remainder of the time.

5 Cooperative Class - Same as (4) except student is in special class for more than half a day.

6 Special Self Contained Class in a Regular School. Student spends all of his time in a special classroom. Non-academic integration only.

7 Day School Student at State School for Visually Impaired.

8 Residential School Resident

9 Homebound Instruction

10 Instruction in Hospital/Institution

b. Name/Location (parish) of School	9b. Age Attended	9c. Public/Private	9d. Program
1. N:			
L:			
2. N:			
L:			
3. N:			
L:			
4. N:			
L:			
5. N:			
L:			

7a. Do you feel that your placement in any of these schools was not appropriate; that is, it was not the best program for you at the time? ___ Yes ___ No

b. If yes: Which schools and why was the placement not appropriate?

8. NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: If student moved from a local school to LSVI - ask, "Why did you leave the local school and go to LSVI?"

9. If student moved from LSVI to a local school - ask, "Why did you leave LSVI and go to the local school?"

10. Ask if applicable: How satisifed are you with the program you were provided at LSVI? (Read responses--probe for explanation--what is the reason for their answer?)

_____ Very Satisfied

_____ Satisfied

_____ Dissatisfied

_____ Very Dissatisfied

Reasons:

11. Ask if applicable: How satisfied are you with the public school program that you attended? (Probe for explanation--what is the reason for their answer?)

_____ Very Satisfied

_____ Satisfied

_____ Dissatisfied

_____ Very Dissatisfied

Reasons: _____

_____

_____

12. Based on your experience and knowledge, what benefits do you feel a student gets from the educational program at LSVI that are not available in the local schools?

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. Based on your experience and knowledge, what benefits do you feel a student gets from the educational program at a local school that are not available at LSVI?

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. At what age did you leave high school? (Enter age. If still enrolled enter 01)

_____

15a. Did you graduate? ___ Yes ___ No

b. If not a graduate: What was your grade level when you left? _____ (Grade Level)

16. Were you in a graded or ungraded program? ____ Graded ____ Ungraded

17. Did you receive a diploma or a certificate? ___ Diploma ___ Certificate

18a. What kinds of services or special equipment did you require in school to off-set your visual handicap? List and describe: _____

_____

_____

_____

b. (If person has an additional handicap)

What kinds of services or special equipment did you require in school to off-set your other handicap(s)? List and describe: _____

_____

_____

_____

19a. Were any of the services or programs you required not provided to you during your schooling? ____ Yes ____ No

b. What were they and who failed to provide them? (List services and whether provided by local school, LSVI or other) _____

_____

_____

_____

c. Why do you think they were not provided?

Services	Not Provided By	Reason Not Provided

20a. What changes would you like to see made in the programs or services offered to blind and visually impaired students or what new programs or services should be offered?

At LSVI: _____

b. At public schools or other programs: _____

21. (a) After leaving or graduating from high school did you get additional compensatory skills/training in areas such as orientation and mobility, living skills, etc.? (b) If so, where? (Enter skill and place of training)

(a) Skill	(b) Place Training Received

22. Which of the following post-secondary educational programs have you attended? What was the outcome?

Program	Y/N	Outcome
Vocational, trade, technical programs	___	
Two-year community college	___	
Four-year college	___	
Post graduate program	___	
Other	___	
Did not attend	___	

Comments: _____

23. Which of the following best describes your employment record since finishing high school? (Check one)

(a) ___ Never employed for wages or earnings from self-employment

(b) ___ Occasional employment, but not working at all for over half the time that has elapsed since finishing your education

(c) ___ Generally employed, but occasionally without a job (have been working for more than half the time that has passed since finishing your education)

(d) ___ Have been able to find and keep jobs since completing education, but work has tended to be unsatisfying in terms of pay and tasks involved

(e) ___ No difficulty in finding and holding suitable employment; for the most part, have been regularly employed since completing education

24. What is your current employment status? Are you: (Read if necessary)

Working full time

(a) On a job related to training you have received ___

(b) On a job not related to training ___

Working part time

(c) On a job related to training ___

(d) On a job not related to training ___

(e) In apprenticeship program ___

Unemployed

(g) Unemployed and seeking work ___

(h) Unemployed and not seeking work ___

Homemaker ___

25a. What is your current occupation? Please describe the work you do.

_____

_____

_____

b. What other types of jobs have you held?

_____

_____

_____

_____

26. Do you feel that your future employment is most likely to be:

(a) Competitive employment among sighted persons ___

(b) In a sheltered workshop ___

(c) Not likely to be employed ___

27. What is your current yearly salary range?

Unpaid _____

Less than $5,000 _____

$5,000 - $10,000 _____

$10,000 - $15,000 _____

$15,000 - $20,000 _____

$20,000 - $30,000 _____

Over $30,000 _____

28. Are you presently: (a) Single ___
(b) Married ___
(c) Divorced/Separated ___
(d) Widowed ___

29. (If unmarried) Do you expect to marry in the future? ___ Yes ___ No ___ Maybe
Any comment: _____

30. Do you presently:
(a) Live alone ___
(b) Live with spouse ___
(c) Live independently but have a roommate ___
(d) Live with parents or other family ___
(e) Live in a group home ___
(f) Other: Specify_____ ___

31. (If living with parents or group home--ask) In the future do you expect to:
(a) Live independently ___
(b) Live in a group home ___
(c) Other: Specify _____ ___
Any comments: _____

32. Since leaving high school have you received benefits through governmental programs such as: (If yes, inqure about frequency)

	Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Consistently
(a) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	____	____	____	____
(b) Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)	____	____	____	____
(c) Rent subsidy	____	____	____	____
(d) Home purchase subsidy	____	____	____	____

33. Which of the following reading methods do you use? (Read categories--mark all that apply) Then ask: Which do you prefer?

	Use	Preferred
(a) Regular print	___	___
(b) Large print	___	___
(c) Low vision aids (specify) _____ _____	___	___
(d) Recorded books	___	___
(e) Volunteer reader	___	___
(f) Braille	___	___
(g) Other	___	___

34. What kinds of recreational activities do you engage in? Would you say you engage in _____ often, sometimes or seldom?
(Activity)

Activity	Frequency

35. What organizations or clubs do you belong to? Would you say that you are very active, somewhat active or not active in _____.
(Organization)

Organization	Activity Level

36. Do you travel by yourself: (Mark all that apply)

(a) To places in your neighborhood _____ Y/N

(b) To places in your community or city _____ Y/N

(c) To other towns or cities _____ Y/N

37. Do you feel that a residential school for the blind and visually impaired is a necessary part of an adequate state educational system? ___ Yes ___ No

Why? _____

38. Do you feel that it is necessary to build a new school for the visually impaired? ___ Yes ___ No

Why? _____

39. Do you have any comments or observations you would like to make?

Appendix D

LSVI BUDGET

The Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired (LSVI) operates with an annual budget of approximately $4 million. Detailed budgetary figures are shown as Table D-1. Almost all of the school's funds (greater than 98 percent) are a direct appropriation from the State general fund. The balance of the school's funds comes from Federal and self-generated sources.

LSVI serves as a distinct budgetary unit within the State budget. Therefore, annual budgetary negotiations occur directly between the school superintendent and the State Budget Office (Division of Administration) and not through the State Department of Education. This process seems to have worked to the school's advantage, since it has experienced a budget reduction only once in the past six years (refer to Table D-1), while all other state agencies have been drastically reduced.

The primary source of Federal funds for the school is the 89-313 program. The 89-313 program was established in 1965 with the passage of P.L. 89-313 and provides Federal monies for handicapped students on a per-student basis to be used for arts, crafts, and cultural enrichment. The FY 1985-86 appropriation totalled $62,397.52 ($238.64 per student x 118 students). The appropriation has decreased annually, with the FY 1986-87 appropriation expected to be reduced by another 15 percent ($53,336 = $452 per student x 118 students).

The 89-313 program provides monies to a total of 4,703 students statewide. Of this total, 2,904 students are located in 35 parish/city school systems, whereas the balance attend other programs under the jurisdiction of entities such as the LSVI, School for the Deaf, Special School District No. 1, special education centers, Department of Health and Human Resources, and the LSU Medical Center.

LSVI receives an annual credit of approximately $10,000 of Federal funds for special textbooks and supplies through the American Federation for the Blind. LSVI also receives another $1,500 per year for large-print fiction books through the Chapter II library program.

Table D-1. LSVI Budget Analysis, 1980-1986

Category	Amount (FY 1980-81)	Amount (FY 1981-82)	Amount (FY 1982-83)	Amount (FY 1983-84)	Amount (FY 1984-85)	Amount (FY 1985-86 estimated)	Amount (FY 1986-87 recommended)
Salaries	2,064,531	2,438,048	2,545,886	2,464,890	2,532,184	2,836,615	2,596,715
Operating Expenses	393,876	435,774	437,542	437,086	507,708	611,106	1,073,098
Professional Services	17,505	14,353	14,746	9,602	12,635	18,430	37,495
Other Charges	90,940	295,211	292,374	307,274	312,800	287,846	160,463
Acquisition and Repair	105,825	151,176	75,923	51,627	141,840	47,979	172,000
TOTAL	2,672,677	3,334,562	3,366,471	3,270,479	3,507,167	3,901,976	4,039,771

Finally, the school generates approximately $2,500 annually through a volunteer services council and student activities.

LSVI has 118 fulltime equivalent positions authorized in the State budget, including administrators, instructors, and food services and janitorial employees. Based on the FY 1985-86 enrollment, this creates a student/employee ratio of 1:1. Forty of these employees are fulltime instructors, thus generating a student/teacher ratio of 2.95:1. This compares to the statewide student/teacher ratio (public schools) of 18.8:1 (FY 1984-85).

LSVI's State appropriation (FY 1985-86) of approximately $4 million represents an annual investment of over $33,000 per student ($3,901,976/118 = $33,067.59). This compares to an expenditure of approximately $2,810 per student (FY 1984-85) receiving regular classroom instruction in Louisiana. The LSVI budget figure includes room and board costs for the 87 residential students as well as costs for the 29 non-residential students for a regular 9-month (180 day) school term and a four-week (20-day) summer program. The budget also includes a salary supplement for teachers equivalent to the local (East Baton Rouge Parish) school system supplement (approximately $10,000 per year) above the State minimum teacher salary. The school does not receive any funds through the State minimum foundation program (MFP), which is granted to all other local school systems as a lump sum educational supplement.

A brief breakdown of the 1985-86 LSVI budget (estimated) follows:

Category	Percent of Total	(FY 1985-86)
Salaries	72.70	2,836,615
Operating Expenses	15.65	611,106
Professional Services	0.47	18,430
Other Charges	9.94	387,846
Acquisition and Repair	1.23	47,979
TOTAL	100.00	$3,901,976

Preliminary figures for the 1986-87 recommended budget indicate a slight overall budget increase, with a decrease in teacher salaries and

increase in operating expenses. A comparison of the FY 1985-86 and the FY 1986-87 budget is shown in Table D-2.

Table D-2. LSVI Budget Comparison

Category	Amount (FY 1985-86)	Percent of Total	Amount (FY 1986-87)	Percent of Total
Salaries	2,836,615	72.70	2,596,715	64.28
Operating Expenses	611,106	15.66	1,073,098	26.56
Professional Services	18,430	0.47	37,495	0.93
Other Charges	387,846	9.94	160,463	3.97
Acquisition and Repair	47,979	1.23	172,000	4.26
TOTAL	3,901,976	100.00	4,039,771	100.00